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THE SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

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THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN DELANE

THE HISTORY OF ST. JAMES'S SQUARE

ETC. ETC.

SIR THOMAS HUNGERFORD
1376-7
From a stained-glass window in Farley Church, drawn by Stanley North

THE SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY WITH A TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF WESTMINSTER AT VARIOUS EPOCHS & A BRIEF RECORD OF THE PRINCIPAL CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES DURING SEVEN CENTURIES

BY ARTHUR IRWIN DASENT

WITH NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LANE & A PORTRAIT OF EVERY SPEAKER WHERE ONE IS KNOWN TO EXIST

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TO

ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1884–1895

NOW 1ST VISCOUNT PEEL OF SANDY

PREFACE

IT is now more years ago than I care to remember since the outline of this book suggested itself to me. Undeterred by the adverse opinion of some who insisted that there was little or nothing, worth the telling, to be said of the earlier Speakers—with the possible exceptions of Coke, Lenthall and Arthur Onslow, to mention the three names which most readily occur to the superficial enquirer—I received sufficient encouragement from the late Sir Archibald Milman and other friends to induce me to supplement and revise the earlier labours of Townsend and Manning in the same field.

The outcome of these years of toil, performed in the intervals of official duty, is a blend of history and biography based on authentic records, and leavened, here and there, with topographical matter tending to throw light upon some of the obscurities which surround the origin of Parliaments. I have endeavoured to show the close nature of the ties which united the greatest of Benedictine Monasteries to the popular assembly in the earliest days of its existence, though I must admit that the allusions to Parliament remaining in the archives

of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are disappointingly few.

There are occasional entries in the carefully kept accounts of the monks of wine bought by the abbots for the entertainment of distinguished personages repairing to Westminster in obedience to the Royal summons, but, with the exception of the extremely interesting entry on page 45 of this volume, I have found little which adds to our previous knowledge of the relations of Church and State in the Middle Ages.

One minor survival of this ancient connection may be mentioned here. This is the custom, still annually observed, of opening the gate leading from Dean's Yard into Great College Street on the first day of a new session, but on no other.

This practice, far from being a mere police regulation of modern date, carries the mind back to that remote period when the Plantagenet Kings, in conjunction with the Abbots of Westminster and the Archbishops of Canterbury, watched with jealous care the growth of representative institutions.

In the middle of the fourteenth century that great ecclesiastic Simon Langham, who sleeps to-day in the chapel of St. Benedict, walked with measured steps to his place in the House of Lords, resplendent in jewelled cope and mitre, escorted by a long train of attendant priests and acolytes, and with his processional cross of gold borne high before him.

In his progress to the Palace he would have met a

throng of knights, scarcely less picturesque in their glittering armour than his own cortège, making peaceful invasion of his monastic house.

Drawn from every shire in the land, they filled the cloisters and choked the vestibules leading to the Chapter House or to some other chamber temporarily set apart for their use, there forthwith to deliver a mighty shout of assent (or the contrary, as the case might be) to the demands of their sovereign lord for the support of the realm and the maintenance of his Royal estate.

There would be little or nothing in the way of discussion. Their voices were collected then and there by some official of the Court, as they stood leaning on their swords. It is true that the carrying of arms within the Palace during the sittings of Parliament had been discountenanced by Edward II, but the prohibition was so commonly disregarded that his successor formally sanctioned the practice in the case of Earls and Barons, save only in his Royal presence. Once their duty had been performed, the Knights of the Shire were at liberty to depart to their homes, and, until they were again summoned to Westminster to repeat the process with little or no variation, save in the amount of the subsidy required of them, the monks could pursue their ordinary avocations undisturbed by the clank of spurs and the tramp of armed men.

Having very briefly outlined the nature of an early Parliamentary assembly, I may here indulge in a fragment of autobiography by way of excuse for having

attempted the history of over two hundred separate elections to the Chair, covering between them a period of more than seven centuries.

Born as I was under the shadow of the Abbey—in the Broad Sanctuary—it was my good fortune to receive my first intelligent impressions of Westminster from the lips of my father's friend and neighbour, the late Dean Stanley. In a sense I may be said to have assisted at the funeral of Lord Palmerston, and, incidentally, at the inauguration of a new Parliamentary epoch, for I retain to this day a vivid recollection of being held up at a window by my nurse to see that great man's coffin carried into the Abbey by the west door. As a boy I was present at the last Westminster election fought under the old system, and I remember the hustings in Trafalgar Square.

But my most enduring memories of the Abbey and its priceless historical associations are those which I received from the holder of an ecclesiastical office, unique in its dignity in this or any other country, and it would be strange, indeed, if I had not acquired from the teachings of so fascinating a guide an abiding interest in Westminster, and all that it means to Englishmen. Somehow my life has been bound up with the place of my birth. Returning to it in 1882—on the nomination of Sir Thomas Erskine-May (Lord Farnborough), my first official chief, to devote myself to the service of the House of Commons—for more than a quarter of a century the greater part of my days, and, in the aggregate,

an appalling number of hours after midnight, have been passed within the walls of St. Stephen's.

I need hardly say that this book is written in no party spirit, nor is it designed to serve any purpose other than that of accuracy.

My publisher has shown such zeal and enthusiasm in the preparation of the portraits and other illustrations, that it will be unnecessary for me to add a word concerning them. I may say, however, that, to the best of my belief, no likeness of either Catesby, Dudley, or Empson has ever been published before. The various printed authorities consulted are, in the majority of instances, indicated in the footnotes, but I desire to acknowledge here my frequent indebtedness to Messrs. Longmans' recently completed *Political History of England.*

Sir Courtenay Ilbert, K.C.B., the present Clerk of the House, gave me the benefit of his views on Mediæval Parliaments, but my especial thanks are due to Mr. T. L. Webster, the second Clerk Assistant of the House, for many valuable suggestions throughout the course of my labours, and for unreservedly placing his knowledge of the more technical questions dealt with in these pages at my disposal. Mr. M. W. Patterson, of Trinity College, Oxford, was good enough not only to help me in the revision of the proof sheets, but to save me from many errors both of omission and commission. The Rev. R. B. Rackham, of the Deanery, Westminster, searched the Sacrist's and other Rolls in the Abbey

Muniment room with a view to helping me in this branch of my researches. Miss Lenthall, of Besselsleigh, Berks, a descendant of the celebrated Speaker of that name, also gave me much valuable information, as did Colonel La Terriere, the present owner of Burford Priory.

Last, but by no means least, I must tender my grateful acknowledgments to Mr. J. Horace Round, the first living authority on peerage law and the most discriminating, as well as the most fascinating, genealogist of the present age.

He kindly brought to my notice the very instructive account of the election of Sir Thomas Lovell to the Chair in the first year of Henry VII. Though unfortunately received too late for incorporation in my Tudor chapter, I trust that it will gain importance by appearing, as it does, in an Appendix at the end of the book. The same remark applies to the speech of Sir Thomas More, on presentation for the Royal approval, which I have also placed by itself, on account of the eminence of the man who made it.

I shall be grateful for any additions or corrections which I may be favoured with, and, especially, for any unpublished letters or documents relating to individual Speakers.

ARTHUR IRWIN DASENT.

THE DUTCH HOUSE, HAMPTON-ON-THAMES,
February 5th, 1911.

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know the names of the subjects of the portraits they possess nor those of the artists who painted them. The head of one notable house sent me three portraits of successive ancestors, each bearing the same Christian name, but which was which and which was the man I wanted for my purpose I had to find out for myself.

I seldom wander round the picture gallery of a country house, however remote, without finding one or more unidentified portraits, and occasionally examples of what I believe to be paintings by English Primitives.

From some points of view, this is the most interesting collection of portraits known to me; its range of date, from the close of the fourteenth century to the present day, the historical and decorative importance of the subjects and the various forms of portraiture, all but unique, make it a veritable pageant of English History.

Within these covers are gathered two portraits from church windows, eight memorial brasses, six monumental effigies; and there is one noble example of the art of Torregiano in the beautiful medallion of Sir Thomas Lovell, now—thanks to the munificence of Sir Charles Robinson—preserved in Westminster Abbey. This is appropriately placed in Henry VII Chapel, guarding, as it were, the same artist's masterpiece, the recumbent figure of Margaret Beaufort, likewise in bronze. There is also a miniature, that of Paul Foley, reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Paul Henry Foley. There are forty-seven paintings, some of which are of rare interest; and seven-

teen fine prints, mostly after famous portraits, the originals of which in many instances cannot now be traced.

It has been a difficult matter to get together so many early portraits. One obstacle has been the fact that Mr. Dasent has added sixteen important characters to the *Dictionary of National Biography:* William Alington (1429), William Alington (1472), Richard Baynard (1421), Henry Beaumont (1331–2), John Bowes (1435), Sir Robert Brooke (1554), Sir Thomas Charlton (1453–4), Sir John Cheyne (1399), John Dorewood (1399), Sir Thomas Englefield (1496–7), Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam (1488–9), John Green (1460), Sir John Guildesborough (1379–80), Peter de Montfort (1258), Henry Pelham (1647), and William Stourton (1413). It is comparatively easy to hunt up portraits when these are given in the *D.N.B.*; but it is not always certain even then that the picture is available for reproduction. For instance, the *D.N.B.* states that a portrait of . . . . . is in the possession of a peer whose ancestor was a Speaker in the eighteenth century, but although I have written three times to the noble possessor he has not vouchsafed a reply; which recalls the famous story about this same ancestor—a well-known Counsel before he was elected to the Chair—who was notorious for his disagreeable, abrupt manner, and broad dialect. On one occasion, when pleading before the Court on some disputed question of manorial rights, he remarked to the presiding judge that he could speak from personal experience on the subject, "for I myself

have two little manors." The judge bowed and said, "We all know that, Sir . . . . . ."

The earliest Speaker of whom we have any kind of portrait is Sir Thomas Hungerford, who was also the first "Speaker for the Commons" mentioned on the Rolls, of whom I have reproduced as frontispiece a drawing by Mr. Stanley North from the portrait at present in the window of the church at Farleigh Hungerford. As Sir Walter Hungerford did not build the church until 1443, forty-five years after the death of Sir Thomas, it may not be exactly contemporary, though experts agree in assigning it a very early date. It is possible, too, that the window may have been removed from Farleigh Castle Chapel after the church was built. A drawing, also by Mr. North, of the freestone monumental effigy in Farleigh Castle has been included. I have, in addition, reproduced a drawing from an Album of the Speakers—which will be dealt with later—in the library of the National Portrait Gallery. This drawing is inscribed as being copied from a picture in the possession of Richard Pollen, Esq. It will be observed that all three portraits have a striking resemblance to each other. The nondescript costume of the picture is, of course, of a later date.

The son of Sir Thomas Hungerford, Sir Walter, was also Speaker in 1414. His tomb is in Salisbury Cathedral, where there was a monument with his effigy in brass. I have reproduced the brassless figure in the hope that, if the brass should be in some private collection, the owner will see fit to restore it to its proper position. I

will now consider the other seven portraits represented by memorial brasses, namely, Thomas Chaucer at Ewelme Church, Oxon; Sir Arnold Savage at Bobbing Church, Kent; and William Catesby at the Church of Ashby St. Ledgers, Northants. These three names impart a strange, opalescent character to one's vision, for apart from the Speakership they suggest pilgrimages, romance, poetry, prose, and even conspiracy. There are also brasses of Sir John Say, slightly restored, in Broxbourne Church, Hertfordshire; Sir Thomas Nevill in the church at Mereworth, Kent; and Thomas Williams in Harford Church, Ivybridge, Devon. In this church there is also a fine brass in colours to the memory of the ancient family of Prideaux, one of whom was the mother of Thomas Williams. The epitaph on Thomas Williams is so quaint that it has been thought desirable to reproduce it:—

Here lyeth the corps of Thom̃s Willm̃s esquire
Twice reader he in Court appounted was
Whose sacred minde to vertu did aspire
Of parlament he Speaker hence did passe

The comen peace he studied to preserue
And trew relygion euer to maynteyne
In place of Justyce where as he dyd serue
And nowe in heaven wth mighty Jove doth Raigne

The brass of Roger Hunt, dated 1473, in Great Linford Church, Bucks, may possibly be that of the Speaker of 1420 and 1433, but it is more probably that of his son.

Of monumental effigies and tombs the following have

been reproduced: Sir Thomas Hungerford; Sir Richard Vernon in Tong Church, Salop; Sir John Mordaunt in Turvey Church, Bedfordshire; Sir Robert Drury in St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds; Sir John Puckering, in Westminster Abbey; Thomas Snagge, at Marston Morteyne, Beds, which has been reproduced from a drawing kindly supplied by his descendant, Sir Thomas Snagge.

In addition to the portrait of Sir Thomas Hungerford in the window of Farleigh Hungerford Church, it should be stated that the portrait of Sir Reginald Bray is from a window in the Priory Church at Malvern. Mr. Justice Bray possesses a drawing of it, from which our reproduction has been made. Sir Reginald Bray died without issue, but he left the greater part of his estates, including the manors at Shere, to the eldest son of his younger brother John; Edmund became Lord Bray, and he gave his estates at Shere to Sir Edward Bray, his next brother, from whom Mr. Justice Bray is descended, and to whom the manors at Shere still belong. Judge Edward Bray is also descended in the same line, being a brother of Mr. Justice Bray.

It must be owned that the *pièce de résistance* of the collection is the wonderful picture at Belvoir, which the Duke of Rutland has most kindly allowed us to reproduce, of Henry VII, with Empson and Dudley on either side of him. This extraordinary picture is on panel, $37\frac{1}{4}$ by $29\frac{3}{4}$ inches, but, unhappily, the master who painted it is unknown, though there can be but little doubt that

it is the work of an English artist. It is, of course, the earliest and finest representation of the painter's art in our Valhalla.

In the National Portrait Gallery are the following paintings, all of which have been used excepting the one of Sir James Dyer: William Wyndham Grenville, Arthur Onslow, Sir John Popham, Sir Christopher Wray, Sir John Glanville, William Lenthall, Sir Harbottle Grimston, Bulstrode Whitelocke, and Robert Harley. In the case of Sir James Dyer a reproduction has been made from a painting in the possession of the Rev. Canon Mayo, of Long Burton.

There is also, as mentioned above, a kind of Speakers' Album in the Reference Library of the National Portrait Gallery, which contains forty-five clever water-colour drawings copied by an early nineteenth-century anonymous artist, probably S. P. Harding or Sylvester Harding, most likely the former, who did much work of this kind. We have, however, only used the following from this interesting collection: Sir Thomas Hungerford, Sir John Baker, from an original picture in the possession of William Baker, Esq., of Norwich; Sir Robert Brooke; Sir Clement Heigham, from a picture in the possession of John Higham, of Bedford; Sir John Croke; Sir Thomas Richardson; Sir Edward Seymour; John Smith; and Sir Thomas Widdrington. This last-named Speaker was buried in the Church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, where there was an imposing monument to his memory; but this was *broken up and, curiously enough, it is believed*

to have been buried in the course of some church restoration, as was undoubtedly done in the case of a ponderous memorial of the Bellasis family in the same church which had fallen into disrepair.

I must not omit to enumerate the names of the other Speakers whose portraits figure in the Album referred to above, for in some cases the names of the contemporaneous owners of the original pictures from which the water-colour drawings were made are given: Sir Thomas More; Sir Thomas Audley; Sir Richard Rich, from a drawing after Hans Holbein, in the possession of Mr. Simco; Sir James Dyer; Richard Onslow; Sir Christopher Wray; Sir Robert Bell, from a miniature in the possession of J. Bell, Esq.; Sir Edward Coke; Sir Edward Phelips; Sir Randolph Crewe; Sir Thomas Crewe; Sir Heneage Finch, from an original picture at the Guildhall; Sir John Finch, from a picture at the Speaker's house (a similar portrait by Van Dyck is at Raby Castle); Francis Rous, from an original picture at Pembroke College, Oxford; Sir Harbottle Grimston; Sir Edward Turnour; Sir Robert Sawyer, from an original picture at Barbers Hall; Sir William Gregory, from an original picture in the possession of Mr. Gregory; Henry Powle; Paul Foley, from an original picture at Coldham; Robert Harley; Sir Richard Onslow; Sir Thomas Hanmer; Sir Spencer Compton; Arthur Onslow; Sir John Cust; Sir Fletcher Norton; Charles Wolfran Cornwall; William Wyndham Grenville; Henry Addington; Sir John Mitford; Charles Abbot, from an original picture at

Christ Church College, Oxford; and Charles Manners-Sutton.

We are indebted to the Earl of Yarborough for permission to reproduce his portrait of Henry Pelham; to the Earl of Leicester for the portrait of Sir Edward Coke; to Lord Barnard for that of Sir John Finch; to MajorWingfield for the picture of Sir HumphreyWingfield; to Mr. George Gery Milner-Gibson Cullum for that of Sir Thomas Gargrave; to Mr. William Robert Phelips, of Montacute, for the fine portrait of Sir Edward Phelips; to Mr. Charles Chute for the portrait of Chaloner Chute at the Vyne; to Lord Grantley for that of Sir Fletcher Norton; to the President of St. John's College, Oxford, for the distinguished portrait of Sir William Cordell, who was executor to the Will of Sir Thomas White, the founder of the college; and to Mr. Bernard Kettle, of the Guildhall Library, for the very interesting portrait of Sir Heneage Finch, by John Michael Wright. Finch was also one of the "Fire" Judges whom Lely fortunately declined to paint. The Corporation then commissioned Wright, a native of Scotland, to paint a number at £36 each. This artist's work is not sufficiently appreciated. He is the only man, we can recollect, who was endowed with two Christian names in the seventeenth century, but perhaps he felt overweighted by the fact, for he frequently signed himself "Michael Ritus."

The following have been reproduced from rare engravings, a few from my own collection, but chiefly from

those loaned to me by that most intelligent and obliging of dealers, Mr. Bruen, of Greek Street : Sir Robert Sheffield ; Sir Richard Rich ; Sir Robert Bell ; Sir Christopher Yelverton ; Francis Rous ; Henry Powle ; Sir Thomas Littleton ; William Bromley ; Sir Thomas Hanmer ; Sir Spencer Compton ; Henry Addington ; Charles Abbot ; Charles Manners-Sutton ; James Abercromby ; Charles Shaw-Lefevre ; John Evelyn Denison ; and Henry Bouverie Brand. This last was kindly lent by the Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr. H. D. Erskine, of Cardross.

I have reserved till the last the important collection of portraits which adorns the Speaker's official residence. These Mr. Lowther with great kindness placed at our entire disposal. The collection is of varied interest and the pictures are of different sizes ; some are unquestionably copies. We have reproduced the following : Sir Thomas Audley ; Sir Job Charlton ; Charles Wolfran Cornwall, by Gainsborough ; Sir Randolph Crewe ; Sir Thomas Crewe ; Sir John Cust ; Sir William Gregory ; Sir John Mitford ; Sir Thomas More ; Richard Onslow ; Sir Richard Onslow ; Sir John Trevor ; Sir Edward Turnour ; and Sir William Williams.

There is also a portrait of the last-named, by Kneller, in the Members' Dining-room of the House, where a collection of paintings of English statesmen is in process of formation.

In addition to the above, the collection contains the following, which have not been used for the reasons that some were fixtures, and in a position where it was im-

possible to obtain satisfactory results for reproduction, whilst others, it will be seen, have been reproduced from other sources: Charles Abbot, by Lawrence; James Abercromby; Henry Addington, by Phillips; Henry Brand, by Frank Holl; William Bromley; Sir Edward Coke; Sir Spencer Compton, by Lely; John Evelyn Denison, by Sir F. Grant; Sir John Finch; Sir John Glanville; William Wyndham Grenville; Sir Harbottle Grimston; William Court Gully, by Sir George Reid; Sir Thomas Hanmer; Robert Harley; Charles Shaw-Lefevre, by Sir Martin Archer Shee; William Lenthall, by Van Dyck or his pupil, Henry Peart; Arthur Onslow; Arthur Wellesley Peel, by Orchardson; Sir Edward Phelips; Francis Rous; Sir Edward Seymour; John Smith; Charles Manners-Sutton; and Sir Christopher Wray.

Since the time of Mr. Speaker Addington it has become a rule that each Speaker's portrait should be added to the collection on his retirement. It is a national loss that this rule has not been longer in operation. The most effectual manner to gauge that loss is to compare this collection with that great historical collection across the river at Lambeth. I shall always remember being shown after lunch one day, by Archbishop Benson, the portraits in Lambeth Palace. The Archbishop told me that Lambeth was the only official residence known to him where could be found the portraits of all the successive occupiers, at any rate for any considerable length of time. During our tour through the various rooms I well remember the

Archbishop stopping in front of the portrait of Laud, and impressively informing me that this identical portrait fell with a terrible crash from its position a few days before Laud was beheaded, and that the incident caused the gravest apprehension, for it was held by Laud's friends to be a bad omen. As we passed from this gallery into another room I was shown a large engraving (some sixteen feet long) of Rome, before which the Archbishop stood, and told me that some time previously he had had an old Oxford friend to lunch with him there, Father Edward Purbrick, the head of the Jesuit College, to whom he repeated the Laud story. As they passed out of the room into the corridor they heard a tremendous thud on the floor, and on re-entering the room the huge engraving of Rome had fallen to the ground. The Jesuit Father stood by, placing his hand over it, and cried out, "Oh, that I should live to see the fall of my beloved Rome!" and straightway left the Palace. I hope I may be pardoned for dragging in this story, but I do not remember having seen it in print. It was certainly not in the Life, and it occurs to me that it may not be inappropriate to record it here.

In addition to the eighty-one portraits of Speakers it has been decided to add three other portraits, not of Speakers, to the series. But perhaps no apology is here necessary. The first is that of John, Earl of Worcester, and the son of the redoubtable Speaker of the same name. The magnificent portrait of this wonderful face is from the cenotaph in Ely Cathedral. He was a great

patron of learning and art. Indeed, Caxton says of him: "he floured in vertue and cunnyng; to whom he knew none lyke, among the lordes of the temporalitie in science and moral vertue," and Fuller exclaims of his beheadal, "The axe did at one blow cut off more learning than was left in the heads of the surviving nobility." The Dukes of Rutland are descended from the Tiptofts.

The next character is that of John Rushworth, Clerk-Assistant of the House of Commons, who on that memorable day, January 3rd, 1641–2, embalmed for all time the kingly speech, and the never-to-be-forgotten, if equivocal, and certainly epigrammatic reply of Speaker Lenthall.

The third portrait is that of Jeremiah Dyson, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, the original picture being now in the possession of his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Myddleton, of Chirk Castle. Dyson was Clerk and afterwards a member of the House.

In the course of my researches I have discovered the whereabouts of several portraits and monumental effigies of Speakers, which have not been used in this work for various reasons. As some of these may be useful to students, it is proposed to place them on record.

In Westminster Abbey there is the fine bronze bust of Sir Thomas Richardson, by Le Sueur, whose equestrian statue of Charles I still stands at Charing Cross. There is a painting of Sir Thomas Audley, by Holbein, in the possession of Lord Braybrooke, and Lord Onslow has portraits of his three Speaker ancestors in

the Speaker's Parlour at Clandon. He has also the well-known picture of Sir Robert Walpole as Prime Minister, with Arthur Onslow in the chair. This is partly painted by Hogarth, and partly by his father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, who was a member of Parliament, and painted the faces. Lord Redesdale possesses a fine portrait of Sir John Mitford by Sir Thomas Lawrence. At Barrow Church, Bury St. Edmunds, there is the effigy of Sir Clement Heigham. In Felstead Church, Essex, there is a monumental effigy of Lord Rich; in Claverley Church, near Wolverhampton, one of Sir Robert Brooke; and at Checkenden, Bucks, where Sir Walter Beauchamp was buried, there is an allegorical brass, his coat of arms, and the following inscription: "Hic jacet Walterus Beauchamp filius Willi: Beauchamp Militis cujus aie ppiciet: Deus Amen." A monument was also erected in St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, to Richard Onslow, the Speaker of 1566. In Eastwell Church, Kent, where Sir Thomas Moyle is buried, there is an altar tomb with his coat of arms, and apparently it was intended to place an effigy upon it, but none exists. There is also in the same church a bust and mural tablet of Sir Heneage Finch, who was a grandson of Sir Thomas Moyle, and at Coverham Church, Yorkshire, where Sir Geoffrey le Scrope's body was taken after his death at Ghent, there is a coloured window with the arms of the Scropes. At Wellington Church, Somerset, is a monumental effigy of Sir John Popham. Mr. Harold St. Maur, M.P., is the possessor of a painting of Sir Edward Seymour,

and there is a fine monumental effigy of him at Maiden Bradley. Lord Crewe also possesses paintings of Sir Randolph Crewe and Sir Thomas Crewe, and the Right Hon. James Round has an oil painting of Sir Harbottle Grimston at Birch Hall, Colchester. At Oxford there are portraits of Sir Thomas More (in the Bodleian), of Francis Rous, at Pembroke (the portrait engraved by Faithorne, 1656), of Arthur Onslow at Wadham, by Hysing (engraved by Faber in 1728), three of William Wyndham Grenville, one at Oriel, by Owen, another at Christ Church also by Owen, and a third in the Bodleian, by Phillips. At Christ Church there is a portrait of Charles Abbot, by Northcote (engraved by Picart, 1804), also one of William Bromley, by Dahl, at the Bodleian.

The reproduction of the Broadside or List of Members, in the possession of Sir Walter Spencer Stanhope, Bart., is one of the earliest if not the earliest known representation of the House in session. It is dated March 17th, 1627–28, with Sir John Finch in the chair. It is greatly to be regretted that no earlier authentic illustration of a sitting of "The Mother of Parliaments" is available, for such must surely exist—either from early woodblocks or from still earlier miniatures. It is hoped, however, that this Note may prove to be the means of bringing others to light.

Mr. Dasent has placed on record some hundred and thirty Speakers, and there are doubtless others whose names, when verified, will some day be added to the

list, when the State Papers shall have been exhaustively examined and carefully calendared, possibly by Americans.

When we reflect on our rough island story as portrayed by Mr. Dasent from the Parliamentary or Speakers' point of view for the past six and a half centuries, we discover that, in addition to the beheading of Lord Worcester, no less than nine Speakers have lost their lives for performing what they considered to be their public duty, and in most cases their estates were sequestrated and their wealth confiscated. Thus life and property were less secure than in these democratic days. For the Speaker of our time is known as "the first Commoner in England," with a salary of £5000 per annum, a palatial residence, picturesque privileges, and a retiring pension of £4000. Surely this ought to be some consolation, even to the most Conservative minds. The names of the Speakers who suffered death were: Sir John Bussy, Thomas Thorpe, William Tresham, Sir John Wenlock, Sir Thomas Tresham, William Catesby, Sir Richard Empson, Edmond Dudley, and Sir Thomas More.

Unfortunately I have not been able to discover any portraits of the following Speakers, though it is almost certain that many of these exist in the shape of paintings, miniatures, stained-glass windows, memorial brasses, and monumental effigies.

William Alington (1429), William Alington (1472), Thomas Bampfylde (1659), Sir Walter Beauchamp

(1416), Sir John Bussy (1393–8), Henry Beaumont (1331–2), William Burley (1437), John Bowes (1435), Richard Baynard (1421), Sir Thomas Charlton (1453–4), Sir John Cheyne (1399), John Dorewood (1399), Sir Thomas Englefield (1496–7), Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam (1488–9), Roger Flower (1416), Sir John Guildesborough (1379–80), Henry Green (1362–3), John Green (1460), Sir Nicholas Hare (1539), Sir Lislebone Long (1659), Sir Peter de la Mare (1377), Peter de Montfort (1258), Sir Thomas Moyle (1542), Sir William Oldhall (1450), Sir James Pickering (1378), Sir John Pollard (1553), Sir John Popham (1449), Sir Henry Redford (1402), Richard Redman (1415), Sir John Russell (1423), William Say (1659–60), Sir Geoffrey le Scrope (1332), William de Shareshull (1350–1), William Stourton (1413), Sir James Strangeways (1461), Sir William Sturmy (1404), Thomas Thorpe (1452–3), William de Thorpe (1347), Sir John Tiptoft (1405–6), William Tresham (1439), Sir Thomas Tresham (1459), William Trussell (1326–7), Sir John Tyrrell (1427), Sir Richard Waldegrave (1381), Sir Thomas Walton or Wauton (1425), Sir John Wenlock (1455), John Wood (1482–3).

After the names of the Speakers I have added the year of election to the Chair, so as to make it easier to identify the various holders of the office, and I hope that correspondents will continue to help me towards the completion of the list.

In response to a letter recently published by the editors of *The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Standard, The*

Athenæum, and *Notes and Queries*, asking for information on the subject of Speaker Portraits, I was fortunate enough to obtain valuable information from the readers of each paper. It would be extremely useful too if readers would help to locate other portraits than those already reproduced or recorded in this work, especially of Speakers down to the end of the eighteenth century.

The topographical illustrations require little notice here, as they are, for the most part, fully explained in the text. The views of the interior of the Jewel Tower are from photographs kindly supplied by Sir Benjamin Stone. Hollar's view of New Palace Yard has not often been reproduced in so perfect a state. The one herein inserted is taken from the late Sir Francis Seymour Haden's own copy, now in Mr. Dasent's possession.

The view of the House of Commons in session is interesting from the idea it gives of St. Stephen's Chapel in the reign of Charles I. It will be noticed that there are two Clerks at the table, thus disproving the usually accepted belief that Rushworth was the first Clerk-Assistant. Speaker Onslow said, on the authority of Hatsell, that he had seen a print of the House in 1620 in which two Clerks were shown sitting at the table; if his statement is correct, this is probably a re-issue of the same view.

The illustration of the Jewel Tower is from a drawing specially made by Mr. L. Hussell Conway. The map of Westminster in 1740, which Mr. Dasent discovered in the

British Museum, is valuable as showing streets projected as well as actually completed. Parliament Street was not built until many years later, nor did Abingdon Street come into existence before 1750.

The caricatures of Gillray and H. B. explain themselves, and the views of Montacute, Burford, and Stoke Edith are from photographs supplied by the present owners.

The illustration of the Mace is from a photograph kindly lent by the Serjeant-at-Arms (Mr. H. D. Erskine). The Mace dates from the Restoration. Although there is no decipherable mark upon it, in all probability it originally bore both date and hall-mark. The wear and tear have, however, been so great that these may have been obliterated, for the Mace has lost in weight, since it left the silversmith's, no less than 23 ounces. Originally it weighed 251 ounces, now it scales only 228 ounces.

Arthur Onslow's house in Soho Square is an especially interesting London view, as it stands on the site of Old Falconbergh House, once the residence of Cromwell's daughter. The author regrets that an illustration of the house in which Coke was born, still standing at Mileham, near Swaffham, has not been included, but the information only reached him at the last moment when the book was in the hands of the binders. If it should be so fortunate as to reach a second edition the omission shall be repaired.

It now only remains for me to express my thanks to: Earl Beauchamp, Earl and Countess Cairns, The Earl

of Crewe, The Earl of Iddesleigh, The Earl of Onslow, The Earl of Radnor, Earl Waldegrave, Viscount Peel, Viscount Powerscourt, Lord Barnard, Lord Hylton, Lord Redesdale, Lady Poltimore, Lady Victoria Manners, Mrs. Stanley Lane Poole, The Rev. Charles H. Coe, The Rev. H. H. B. Ayles, D.D., The Rev. C. T. Eland, The Rev. J. A. Halloran, The Rev. C. W. Holland, The Rev. E. Hutton-Hall, The Rev. John T. Steele, The Rev. C. B. Hulton, The Rev. R. Wall, The Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr. C. J. Holmes and Mr. J. D. Milner, of the National Portrait Gallery, Mr. R. P. Chope, Mr. J. G. Earle, F.S.A., Mr. Henry Greensted, Mr. A. L. Humphreys, Mr. Geo. Robinson, Mr. J. Horace Round, LL.D., Mr. J. L. Rutley, Mr. Henry Yates Thompson, for much valuable aid, and to Mr. Dasent himself for his kindness in permitting me to append this note to his exhaustive researches.

JOHN LANE.

The Bodley Head.

: : THE SPEAKERS OF : :
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

THE SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

CHAPTER I

WESTMINSTER IN THE REIGN OF HENRY III—THE ISLE OF THORNS—THE PALACE AND THE ABBEY—PREFERENCE OF HENRY FOR WESTMINSTER—DAWN OF THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION—WESTMINSTER THE EARLIEST MEETING PLACE OF THE COMPLETE PARLIAMENT

NOTWITHSTANDING the inevitable tendency of the age to disparage the past, the opinion is still widely held that the House of Commons is amongst the greatest of human institutions. The primary object of the following pages has been to present a fuller and more accurate account than has previously been attempted of the presiding officers of this great instrument of popular liberty. At the same time it has been the author's aim to describe how the Lower House of Parliament came into existence; the place where it first held its deliberations (with a topographical and architectural description of Westminster at various epochs); the circumstances under which Parliament assembled, with a brief retrospect of

its principal legislative and administrative achievements. An attempt has also been made to trace throughout the history of the House of Commons the close connection which formerly existed between the Abbey and the seat of government. These points are severally of importance not only to the student of constitutional history, but to all who value the conditions under which modern England is governed.

The cities of Oxford and Lincoln are entitled to take precedence of London as the places in the kingdom selected for the holding of the earliest known Parliaments; but to Westminster undoubtedly belongs the distinction of having witnessed the dawn of the English Constitution. King John frequently visited Oxford, and in 1204 he held a *colloquium* there for the purpose of procuring a grant in aid. In November, 1213, writs were addressed to the Sheriffs requiring them to send all knights in arms in their bailiwicks, and four knights from each county, "*ad loquendum nobiscum de negotiis regni nostri*"; and two years later the same king again came to Oxford in the vain hope that his nobles would meet him there.

Lincoln was the city chosen by Henry III in 1226, whilst he was still a minor, as the rendezvous of four knights elected by the *milites et probi homines* of the bailiwicks of eight specified counties, in order to settle long-standing disputes with the Sheriffs as to certain articles of their Charter of Liberty. But of the proceedings of these embryo Parliaments no record has been preserved.

No returns to these tentative and restricted assemblies have been discovered, and the earliest germ of popular

representation is to be found in connection with the Isle of Thorns. The history of that traditionally sacred spot, revered by Edward the Confessor above all other parts of his dominions, is inextricably associated with the second founder of the Abbey.

Born at Winchester, Henry III was the first of the Plantagenet line to identify himself with Westminster. Distrusting the city of London, he felt himself secure within the sheltering walls of the great Benedictine Abbey, the re-edifying and beautifying of which was to be the darling project of his later years. Between 1245 and his death in the place of his adoption Henry is believed to have spent more than half a million of money on the rebuilding of the Confessor's church, and, according to the somewhat exaggerated view of the late Dean Stanley, his enormous exactions have left their lasting trace on the English Constitution in no less a monument than the House of Commons, which rose into existence as a protest against the lavish expenditure on the mighty Abbey which it confronts.[1]

As if to point the moral, the only contemporary memorial of Simon de Montfort is to be seen to this day, carved with the arms of other benefactors, upon the Abbey walls.[2] The tendency of modern historical research has been rather to deprive De Montfort of his

[1] Stanley's *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 1896 edition, p. 110. At the same time a large amount of money was raised by subscriptions which entitled the donors to indulgence in purgatory, and much of the money spent in the rebuilding of the church was derived from the King's private income.

[2] Simon de Montfort's shield, a double-tailed lion, is reproduced on the outer cover of this volume.

claim to be the originator of the representative system,[1] but there can be no manner of doubt that, in the closing years of his strenuous Parliamentary life, his efforts in the cause of popular government caused his name to be regarded as a talisman among the English people.

Henry III was the first of the English kings who could properly be called a great patron of the arts. Though, in his remodelling of the Abbey, his conception of architectural effect was derived from foreign sources, yet it is to his encouragement of native art that London and the nation owe that triumph of the Early English style (happily little altered internally since the thirteenth century), the choir and transepts which replaced the church of the Confessor. Some doubt exists as to how far westward Henry carried the rebuilding of the nave, but Dean Stanley was of opinion that the beautiful diaper pattern upon the walls marked the limits of his work, leaving only the remaining bays to the westward to be completed by his successors on the throne. The vaulting of the nave was not finished till a much later date, but the junction of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century work, where the diaper pattern ceases, is still readily discernible in the altered level of the triforium string courses.[2] The delay in the completion of the nave, as it now stands, was probably due to the fact that the first three Edwards cared less for the Abbey than did Henry III, and pre-

[1] The representative principle in England may be said to date from the introduction of the jury system for purposes of inquests, etc., by William I and its further development under Henry II.

[2] Since Dean Stanley wrote, the researches of Messrs. Micklethwaite, Lethaby, Bond and, more recently, the Rev. R. B. Rackham, have added enormously to our knowledge of the fabric of the Abbey and the exertions made by individual abbots to complete the original design of Henry III.

ferred to concentrate their attention on the rebuilding of St. Stephen's Chapel in the palace, the building which, as we shall show later on, was destined in after years to become the home of the Commons, and so to continue for well-nigh three centuries. The influence of Amiens and Rheims, which Henry III knew and loved, is apparent in the apse of Westminster Abbey, in the ambulatory, and in the nest of chapels radiating from the central shrine, yet, to their lasting credit be it spoken, the erection and adornment of almost the whole of the great church was due to native craftsmen.

It was customary for the Kings of England to wear their crowns at least once a year at Winchester, and preferably at Eastertide. In the case of Henry III this symbol of sovereignty was a mere circlet of gold, for his father had lost the ancient crown with the other regalia in the Wash. And at Winchester, the place of his birth, Henry continued to keep his money and his treasure. The office of the Exchequer at Westminster, where the money was in the first instance paid in, has been frequently confused with the Winchester Treasury, where it was permanently stored. Gradually the Winchester storehouse was superseded for all purposes by that at Westminster, and from Plantagenet times both Treasury and Jewel House formed part of the appurtenances of the Palace. But little known, owing to its remote situation, in a quiet mews off Great College Street, the venerable Jewel Tower still stands much as it left the builder's hands not later than the reign of Richard II. To a chamber in this historic building Charles I and Rushworth, the Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons, retired to compare their respective

notes of the proceedings on the occasion of the attempted arrest of the Five Members in 1642.

An illustration of this interesting relic of old Westminster will be found reproduced in this volume. In it are now stored the standard weights and measures in the custody of the Board of Trade. Surrounded as it is on nearly every side by high modern buildings, it is difficult to obtain a good view of the exterior. The view here given is taken from the leads at the back of the house lately in the occupation of Mr. Henry Labouchere, and tradition says that under it have been discovered the traces of an underground passage leading from the Palace to the Abbey. It is perhaps not known to many of those who frequent the Palace at the present day that a portion of the outer surface of the western wall of Westminster Hall has been preserved precisely as it left the hands of its Norman builders, and with their masons' marks still intact on many of the stones.[1]

The lower storey of the cloister,[2] added to the Hall by Mr. Pearson in 1888 on the demolition of Sir John Soane's Law Courts, replaces, according to the views of that capable architect, an earlier lean-to structure on the same site. For some 800 years the outer air has been excluded from the Norman masonry, and to the protecting influence of this cloister and its predecessors is due the preservation of this relic of the Palace of Rufus. Even after the great fire of 1834, one of the

[1] I give this information on the authority of Mr. Pearson, though good judges have also been of opinion that no part of the ashlar work of the Hall is of earlier date than Richard II.

[2] Now used as the Journal office and Private Bill office.

THE JEWEL TOWER
From a drawing by L. Hussell Conway

original Norman windows remained at the south end of the eastern side of the Hall, immediately above the string-course added by Richard II, and a good illustration of it will be found in Brayley and Britton's *Palace of Westminster*,[1] but it was most unnecessarily destroyed in the course of some repairs to the Hall in the reign of William IV.

By an ingenious contrivance Mr. Pearson filled the spaces between the buttresses (added by Richard II to support the great thrust of the incomparable roof) with a two-storeyed gallery, which, though much criticised at the time of its erection, should preserve for centuries to come the only genuine fragments of Norman work remaining in and about the Hall. If, when Mr. Pearson's additions were made, the sills of the windows on the west side had been lowered to correspond with those on the east, the symmetry of this noble building would have been enhanced, but unfortunately the opportunity was missed.

The same architect desired to rebuild the principal, or northern, façade, the towers of which have a spurious air, but a parsimonious Treasury withheld the necessary funds, as it withheld them from Sir Charles Barry when he proposed to cover the roof of the Hall with copper and to carry his Victoria Tower up a hundred feet higher than it is now. On entering the gates of New Palace Yard the least observant will notice that the ground falls rapidly towards the great door of the Hall. In the course of centuries the level of the soil has been raised many feet in the vicinity of the Abbey, but were the ground to be excavated to the same depth as in

[1] Plate VIII.

the ornamental garden between St. Margaret's Church and the Hall, it would at once be apparent to the most casual observer that the Abbey as originally designed stood on considerably higher ground than the ancient residence of the Saxon and Norman kings. Thus its commanding situation in the centre of Thorney Island caused it to dominate the surrounding buildings, producing a grand architectural effect which is now, unhappily, lost. Both Palace and Abbey were surrounded, not only by strong walls of defence, but by running water on every side.

A considerable stream, having its source in the wooded northern heights, ran through what is now the Green Park to join the estuary of the Thames. This was the Aye bourne, from which Hay [Aye] Hill, Tyburn, and Ebury derive their names. Eye Cross, an oft-quoted boundary in the precincts of the Abbey, stood on the same stream. Successive alterations of the surface have obliterated many of its channels, but, by carefully comparing the *terrain* with the most trustworthy maps, the limits of Thorney Island can even now be traced. A stream ran from near Storey's Gate to De La Hay Street, through Gardeners Lane, and emptied itself into the Thames near Cannon, or, as some have called it, Channel, Row. This waterway in its turn was connected with a long ditch or moat occupying the site of Princes Street, whilst another brook flowed by Great Smith Street and Great College Street to the river near Millbank. Westward of this again lay a great marsh known to the Anglo-Saxons as Bulinga Fen.[1]

It must be remembered that in Norman, and probably

[1] The name has been wisely revived by the London County Council in forming a new street by the Tate Gallery of British Art.

STAIRCASE AND ANCIENT DOORWAY IN THE JEWEL TOWER
From a photograph by Sir Benjamin Stone

much later, times the whole site of St. James's Park and Tothill Fields was a tidal swamp, and that where Buckingham Palace now stands bitterns boomed and snipe drummed. St. James's Park is said to have been formed by Henry VIII to gratify Anne Boleyn after the Court had removed from Westminster to Whitehall. To this day there is water in the cellars of the houses in Birdcage Walk at certain states of the tide, and when the new building for the Office of Works at Storey's Gate was in course of erection, a few years ago, the greatest difficulty was experienced in procuring a solid foundation, owing to the boggy nature of the subsoil at this spot. Whenever an old house on the site of the Long Ditch is rebuilt similar difficulties are encountered, and the fact that the soil underlying the Abbey and the Palace is composed of pure water-worn sand is the probable explanation of there being no crypt under the church, and no subterranean chamber under the great Hall. The gardens and orchards, and even the vineyards, of Westminster were famous for centuries before the atmosphere of London became laden with soot, and foul from the smoke of innumerable chimneys; and in a place called the Herbary, "between the King's Chamber and the Church," Henry III ordered pear trees to be planted, so that he might see the Abbey rising in all its fairness, in the springtime, above a wealth of white blossom.

Before the destruction of Gardeners Lane simultaneously with King Street—for centuries the only approach to Westminster from the north, for Parliament Street is, as it were, a thing of yesterday—it was easy to trace in its bends and curves the tortuous course

of the bed of the stream which once divided the Isle of Thorns from what we now call Whitehall.

The King Street avenue to Westminster only came into existence when the Empress Maud, at her own charge, threw a bridge across the stream at this point, additional proof, if such were needed, of the detachment of the city of London from the residence of the Norman kings. When the river was yet unembanked, the usual mode of approach to Westminster was by water, and, shifting the scene to Great College Street, it requires no great effort of imagination to picture in the mind's eye the clear, cool water flowing alongside the wall of the Infirmary garden, and the Abbot issuing from his water-gate to take barge upon the Thames. Architecturally, London may have gained by the formal alignment of the Embankment, but much that was picturesque was destroyed when, on the destruction of the foreshore, a great natural force was hemmed in between solid walls of stone, and a mighty river reduced to the commonplace proportions of the Liffey or the Seine. Before the Thames was urbanised, so to speak, Thorney Island was subject to periodical inundations, and Matthew Paris relates how the untrammelled waters swept into Westminster Hall and boats floated within its gates.[1]

The space enclosed in the thirteenth century by these various streams, of which the Gardeners Lane channel formed the northern boundary of the island, the Thames the eastern, the Long Ditch the western, and the College Street brook the southern, measured rather less than five hundred yards from north to south, and less than

[1] Only within the last decade a violent thunderstorm which burst over Westminster once more flooded the Hall, so that the water stood a foot deep at its principal entrance.

VAULTED CHAMBER IN THE JEWEL TOWER
From a photograph by Sir Benjamin Stone

three hundred from east to west. Yet this circumscribed area is believed to have supported a population of many thousands, if there be taken into account, in addition to all the King's dependents, those of the Abbot. Everything required for the Court was produced within the walls, and such was the profusion of the Plantagenets, that they maintained within the verge of the palace a small army of artificers.

When we remember that, in addition to the multitude of servants and men-at-arms (Richard the Second never moved without an escort of four thousand archers), the great officers of state—many of whom were in constant attendance on the Sovereign—were all housed within the Palace, and when, further, we take into account the vast establishment of the adjoining Abbey, it is probable that the total population of Thorney, at the period when it first became the meeting-place of Parliament, amounted to some twenty-five thousand souls.

The difficulty of reaching Westminster in the Middle Ages is brought home to us by numerous recorded instances of failure on the part of the Commons to comply with the royal summons. In most cases the delay was attributed to the state of the roads. Never good at the best of times, in rainy seasons and severe winters the main highways became almost impassable. The long and expensive journey to London from the northern parts of the country could only be accomplished after many halts by the way. Leaving Furness, for example, the Abbot would cross the sands at Morecambe Bay on his way to York to join the Archbishop. Five-and-twenty miles would be as much as he would accomplish

in his first day's progress, and, after putting up at a rest house on the line of route, he would cross the moors separating Lancashire from Yorkshire on the next day. One or more of these ancient rest houses are still standing. There is one at Halton and another near Clitheroe. From York to London the Abbot would enjoy the protection of the Archbishop's retinue on the road. The Abbots of Abingdon and other great ecclesiastics had town houses in Westminster from a very early period. Many of the episcopal sees owned mansions in the Strand with gardens sloping to the waterside, and the Archbishops of York only lost their hold on Whitehall with the fall of Wolsey.

Some of those who came from the home counties, and who dwelt within reach of the Thames, were able to make a portion of the journey to London by water. Archbishop Wake, who died in 1737, is said to have been the last Primate who habitually came from Lambeth to Westminster in his state barge. But the hardships cheerfully endured by the Knights of the Shire and the burgesses whose homes lay in remote districts must have been considerable in the thirteenth century. Such was the habitual insecurity of the roads that the faithful Commons, in their efforts to reach Westminster, were accustomed to travel in large bodies; the knights on horseback, each with his retinue of men-at-arms, whilst the humbler burgesses in a straggling cavalcade formed their own body-guard. Wheeled vehicles were seldom, if ever, used on long journeys, and for the all-sufficient reason that there was no conveyance to be had between the clumsy waggons employed by the Sovereign on his royal progresses and the two-wheeled agricultural carts,

which were as yet little better than square boxes of rudely-fashioned planks.

The luxury of private coaches dated from a much later period, and their use only became practicable when the condition of the main roads had been materially improved. An illustration of the almost universal practice of making long journeys on horseback is afforded by a letter written by Dame Margaret Paston to her husband, who was lying ill of " a great dysese " in London in the fifteenth century. She begged him to return to Norfolk as soon as he could bestride his horse. Though the Pastons were rich people as the times went, the idea of his returning home in a carriage seems never to have occurred to either of the pair.

Peers and prelates did not start on a journey without a great train following in their wake. On such occasions they took with them a number of body servants of different degrees, like kings in miniature. Attended by their squires, their men-at-arms, their jesters, and their menial servants, they descended like locusts on the reluctant inhabitants of the region through which they desired to pass.

Purveyance was in the main a royal prerogative, yet the demands of lesser men often weighed heavily on the rural population. At sundown the traveller of high degree, and likewise his retainers, sought shelter for the night.[1] In the monastery hospitality was held to be a religious duty, and as most of the greater ecclesiastical houses had been, in part at least, endowed by the nobility, its members felt no compunction in asking for the accommodation so freely accorded. But only people

[1] Compare Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages.*

of exalted rank were entertained in the monastery itself. The great mass of their dependents fared less sumptuously in the guest-house.

The habits of courtesy prevailing in mediæval England ensured the knight the asylum of the guest-chamber in the house of his equal in rank. Thus, whilst the monks received the poor from charity and the rich from necessity, the country gentleman upon his travels quartered himself upon his like. The common inns were only used by the lower middle class, and they as a rule did not move far from their homes. Too expensive for the poor and too miserable in their appointments for the better class of traveller, these inns did not emerge from the chrysalis stage until the advent of the public coach in the seventeenth century. What kind of accommodation the Knights of the Shire found at Westminster it is difficult to say. Probably the evils of overcrowding were thus early in evidence. Sanitation was so far unknown that the cleansing of the streets was left to that volunteer army of scavengers—the kites. Soaring in mid-air around the Abbey they fell, like bolts from the blue, on the offal and carrion with which the narrow streets were strewn, to bear it away to their nesting-places in the wooded northern heights.

The condition of the main thoroughfares in London was not much better than that of the country roads. In 1314 several members of the Court petitioned Edward II to have the road from Temple Bar to the Palace Gate at Westminster repaired. It was said to be so dangerous that rich and poor alike, whether on horseback or on foot, were impeded in their passage to and fro. Those who were compelled to use it "en

mauvais tempz " were " desturbez de lor busoignes suire par profoundesce del dit chemyn." Nothing was done for some years, but Edward III ordered the road to be paved from end to end, and the expense defrayed by a tax on all merchandise going to the Staple at Westminster. At the same time the Staple was defined to extend from Temple Bar to Tothill.[1] But all journeys, whether by sea or land, must have an ending, and at last the faithful Commons, with a perseverance only equalled by that of the Canterbury pilgrims, came in sight of the massive towers and frowning walls of Westminster, and passed, awestruck at the novelty and magnificence of the scene, within the portals of the Palace. There in the heart of the ancient buildings stood, until the disastrous fire of 1834, the actual room in which the Confessor died—the painted chamber of European renown—the very hub and centre of the governance of England since Anglo-Saxon times.

The names of several other buildings in the old Palace have been preserved. Marculph's Tower stood on the river bank and overhung the water. In one of its chambers the triers of Petitions, the precursors of legislation by Bill, met for centuries. There was the Little Hall, in which the Commons were ordered to assemble in the reign of Edward III.[2] The chamber of the Chauntour [3] was near the Palace Gate, and here the triers of Petitions for Gascony met.

The Star Chamber is mentioned in the Rolls for 1427, and the Council Chamber " près la grande Chambre du Parlement " in 1436, but both of them were probably

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. I, p. 302. [2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 294.
[3] Of St. Stephen's Chapel.

in existence long before. The green chamber was another apartment, the exact position of which it is not now possible to identify. In it a miscreant secreted himself at the bidding of the Bishop of Winchester, with the intention of murdering Henry VI, when Prince of Wales, after which no more is heard of it. The Chamber of the Cross was the scene of the meeting of the first Parliament of Henry VII, and the White Hall, which must not be confused with the later palace of that name, was the usual meeting-place of the House of Lords.

Many of these time-honoured halls remained till the close of the eighteenth century, when the all-destroying Wyatt was unfortunately appointed Superintendent of the Works. What escaped his iconoclastic hand, with the exception of Westminster Hall and the crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel, perished in the great fire of 1834, to which further allusion will be made in these pages. The great bell tower which forms such a conspicuous object in Hollar's *View of Westminster* was not in existence in the thirteenth century, nor had the chapel of St. Stephen, afterwards the home of the Commons of England, thus early assumed the shape it bore for five hundred years.

What must have been the feelings of the Knight of the Shire when, having never perhaps been absent from his broad acres before, he entered Thorney, the shrine of the Confessor, and found himself for the first time in the presence of his sovereign lord the King! A visit to the Confessor's tomb in the adjoining Abbey would undoubtedly be paid during his sojourn in London, and if, by chance, any of his friends or neighbours were

at legal variance, was not justice administered from the fountain head within the same precincts?

One of the greatest changes which have taken place in the Palace of Westminster since Henry III took up his abode there has been the formation of the comparatively modern thoroughfare between the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament which leads to Millbank and on to Pimlico. In the Middle Ages there was no road at all through Old Palace Yard. This open space represents the Inner Bailly, whilst New Palace Yard to the northward formed the Outer Bailly of the original structure. Access to City, Palace, or Abbey could only be obtained by one or other of the strongly fortified gates in the high wall of defence which girt alike the residence of King and Abbot. Of these there were four, and one at least—the High Gate towards London—was held to be of surpassing beauty. Nor was there then any road leading up from the river-side, along the line of the modern Great George Street, towards St. James's Park and the agricultural lands of the great Benedictine house. Until the Thames, the *fluvius maximus piscosus* of Fitz-Stephen, was bridged at Westminster the course of traffic north and south adhered to the horse ferry at Lambeth and avoided the populous suburb on the river bank.[1]

Thorney in the thirteenth century we know to have been a fortress, a prison, a palace, and a great religious house. Defended from the outer world by lofty walls and formidable battlements, upon which the royal archers

[1] The late Sir Walter Besant thought otherwise, and maintained that Thorney was a thickly populated spot long before the building of the Abbey, but unfortunately he failed to adduce any convincing evidence of his contention.

kept watch and ward night and day, the extent and magnificence of ancient Westminster must have been an impressive sight for provincial eyes. Surrounded by its great and lesser sanctuaries, its almonries, its bell towers, its chapels, gate-houses, and prisons, Thorney stood for all that was most inspiring to the average English subject, whether of high or low degree.

Mention of its prisons recalls the grim fact that the Abbots of Westminster possessed amongst their many privileges the franchise of " furca et fossa," a gallows for male offenders, and a pit filled with water for the women. In the vicinity of Dean's Yard, to call it by its modern name, the Abbot set up his tree of death on a spot known as " the Elms," whilst Old Palace Yard was for centuries the place of execution for malefactors confined in the King's prison. And, even after it ceased to be so used, the practice of exposing the heads of felons on the façade of Westminster Hall carried on the sinister traditions of the place.

In contradistinction to these sombre associations, an age of chivalry provided for the King's loyal subjects an ever-changing feast for the eye. It was, on the whole, a merry England which ushered in the dawn of the Constitution. The warmth and colour of the Middle Ages, the tramp of armed men in the Palace, the stately processions, and the gorgeous ritual of the Catholic Church in an age of almost universal piety, are gone from us, with a corresponding loss of reverence in the minds of the people, never more to be regained amidst the dull conventionalism of the twentieth century. Beauty, if perceived at all, must be felt, and the manhood of England gained enormously by the teachings of

chivalry, loyalty, and honour so abundantly manifested in the period under review.

Coronation feasts, solemn jousts and tournaments in Tothill Fields held amidst the pageantry which the times produced, allegories, mystery plays, tiltings at the ring; all these were part and parcel of the life of a Londoner in the Middle Ages. Though there were as yet no theatres, the Bankside in Southwark offered more questionable attractions to the profligate, who took boat at Stew Lane and landed on the Surrey side at Cardinal Cap Alley. The great fairs granted to the Abbots by Henry III, to the annoyance and the lasting detriment of the City of London, were another joyous feature of mediæval Westminster. There, too, could be witnessed, until it was finally superseded by Trial by Jury, the moving spectacle of the ordeal by battle.

When life's task is done, it has ever been the summit of an Englishman's ambition to sleep within the hallowed walls of St. Peter's. And, here at Westminster, within one encompassing rampart, were congregated the residence of the Sovereign, the Courts of Law, the greatest of Benedictine monasteries, and the accustomed meeting-place of the Council of the nation. Well may Thorney be called, when our purview opens, the seed-plot of sovereignty, liberty, justice, and piety!

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS UNDER THE PLANTAGENETS
(*Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*)

The Early Speakers and their Precursors

Peter de Montfort
William Trussell
Henry Beaumont
Geoffrey Le Scrope (Chief Justice)
William de Thorpe (Chief Justice)
William de Shareshulle (Chief Justice)
Henry Green (Chief Justice)
Thomas Hungerford
Peter de la Mare
James Pickering
John Guildesborough
Richard Waldegrave
John Bussy

THE Knights of the Shire, the backbone of the English representative system, were the logical outcome of the severance of the *barones minores*, or lesser tenants in chief, from the House of Lords, a body lineally descended from the feudal Norman *Curia*, and consisting of the greater tenants in chief or *barones majores*. These derived their Parliamentary existence mainly, if not wholly, from the principle of primogeniture. Sitting in the first instance by virtue of tenure, a very important modification, designed in the first instance to secure sufficient attendance on the King in Council, was in course of time introduced, which led to developments more far-reaching in their effect than their authors perhaps foresaw. This epoch-making innovation was the issue of a writ of summons, without which none

could attend. Viewed by its recipients in the earliest days of its employment as an inalienable right, it gradually came to be regarded as a privilege, and especially when it was found that it could be used on occasion to exclude possible opponents as well as to include known supporters of the Crown. By a master-stroke, amounting to positive genius, Simon de Montfort so utilised this method of selection as to cause attendance on the King in Council to be regarded as a privilege by one class—the magnates of the realm—and as a burden, haply to be evaded by the other.[1]

The precise date at which the lesser tenants-in-chief ceased to attend at Westminster, in company with the greater barons, and became merged in the body of the Knights of the Shire cannot now be determined, but, once the control of the Crown over the summons was tacitly admitted, it only remained to provide for the separate representation of the under tenants and freeholders in Parliament, and the transition from tenure to selection was in all essentials complete.[2] From the ranks of the Knights of the Shire the Speakers were invariably drawn until the reign of Henry VIII, when a burgess was first selected for that honour.[3] The aristocracy of

[1] *Peerage and Pedigree*, by J. Horace Round, 1910, Vol. I, p. 357, where the origin of the House of Lords is dealt with by a master hand.

[2] For the early history of the House of Lords, the first Report of the Lords Committee on the Dignity of the Peerage, presented to the House 12 July, 1819, and further Reports printed in 1820, 1822, and 1825, are especially valuable. This Committee was presided over by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and its several voluminous Reports have been freely used, often without acknowledgment, by almost every writer on the British Constitution since the date of issue.

[3] The rural population far outnumbering the sum total of the towns, the Knights were able to control the House, while the burgesses, in many instances, were content to petition Parliament without attending it in person.

the Lower House of Parliament, they were first summoned to Westminster during Henry the Third's absence in Gascony in 1254 by Eleanor of Provence and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the King's brother.[1]

There is no evidence that the summons was ever obeyed, yet it stands as a landmark in our Parliamentary annals from its embodying the principle of popular representation. The industrious Prynne,[2] writing in the seventeenth century, cited the terms of the writ commanding the sheriffs to cause two knights to be *elected* in every county by the counties themselves, to appear before the King in Council to report what voluntary aid each county would grant towards the defence of Gascony. "Præcipimus," the writ ran, "quod præter omnes prædictos venire faciatis coram consilio nostro, apud Westmonasterium, in quindena Pasche prox futur, quatuor legales et discretes milites de Comitatibus prædictis, quos iidem Comitatus ad hoc *eligerint* vice omnium et singulorum eorundem, videlicet duos de uno Comitatu et duos de alio." Thus the financial exigencies of the Sovereign were the primary and determining cause of a resort to popular election.

The gradual decline of the feudal aristocracy of the Norman Conquest and the expulsion of foreigners enabled the great Simon de Montfort to realise his dream of England for the English, and to stamp his name for all time upon the Constitution, by setting up a representative assembly to which the writ of summons

[1] Regent or Joint Guardian of England 1253–54; King of the Romans 1256–71. Died 1272.

[2] The much-persecuted Prynne, the stormy petrel of debate and the arch-enemy of the stage, succeeded Selden as Custodian of the Public Records in the Tower of London.

was to be a right, instead of, as in the case of the House of Lords, a privilege, to be issued or withheld at the will of the Sovereign. The loss of Normandy and other French possessions of the Crown had the important result of rendering the Baronage essentially English, a fact which must not be lost sight of in estimating the patriotic action of De Montfort.

A further stage in the growth of Parliamentary institutions was reached in 1264–65, when, for the first time, De Montfort caused the summons to be extended to the burgesses as well as to the Knights of the Shire :—

"Item mandatum est singulis Vice Com per Angl, quod venire faciant Duos milites de legalioribus, probioribus et discretioribus militibus singulorum Comitatum ad Regem London in Octob prædict in forma prædicta. Item in forma prædicta scribitur civibus Eborum, civibus Lincoln et cœteris Burgis Angl quod mittant in forma prædicta Duos de discretioribus, legalioribus, et probioribus tam civibus quam Burgensibus suis. Item in forma prædicta mandatum est Baronibus et probis hominibus Quinque Portuum prout Continetur in Brevi inrotulato inferius."

The Cinque Ports, it will be observed, were specially directed to send representatives to Parliament, an instance of the importance already attaching to the question of maritime defence.[1]

It would appear that the writs then issued to knights, citizens, and burgesses were identical in form and substance with those addressed to the spiritual and temporal lords. None were issued to the citizens of London, as their liberties had been seized by the King, many of

[1] Quoted by Prynne in the second part of *A Register and Survey of the Several Kinds and Forms of Parliamentary Writs*, 1660, p. 29.

them imprisoned, and their estates confiscated, for having sided with the Barons. York and Lincoln were the only cities specially mentioned, and throughout the long reign of Henry III distrust of the City of London and a preference for Westminster were shown by the reluctant conceder of Parliaments. On the one occasion upon which he called a Parliament to assemble in the Tower of London the Barons refused to attend except at Westminster.

The transactions of these early Parliaments, all of them of brief duration, consisted for the most part of petitions to the Crown for redress of grievances, and the principal function of their presiding officers was to collect the views of the majority and to report to the King what amount of aid the assembly was willing to grant. Little or nothing in the nature of articulate protest by the minority is entered on the Rolls, nor is it definitely known at what date the practice of dividing the House and recording the names of those who dissented from the majority was instituted. In 1258 Henry III was in such pressing need of money that he announced that he must have a third of all property. In return the Barons were powerful enough to extort from him [1] a promise of direct control over the executive.

Even whilst these pages were passing through the press, portions of three writs, addressed to the sheriffs of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, Surrey and Sussex, and Wiltshire, summoning both Knights of the Shire and burgesses to a Parliament to be held at Westminster at Easter, 1275, were accidentally found in the dust at the bottom of a chest transferred to the Public

[1] In the "Mad Parliament" of Oxford.

Record Office when the Chapel of the Pyx in the Abbey precincts was being cleared out, preparatory to its being thrown open to the public. This valuable historical discovery, foreshadowing to some extent the "Model Parliament,"[1] included the names of the members returned for the above-mentioned counties, for Middlesex, Somerset, and Dorset, and also for Warwickshire and Leicestershire.

It is true that in 1275 the wording of the sheriffs' instructions was "Venire facias," leaving the all-important condition of *election* unspecified, but it must be remembered that from the time of King John until the various features of our complex Parliamentary system were, so to speak, stereotyped in 1295, novelties and experiments were frequently being introduced in the form of the directions issued by the King to the returning officers. Sometimes the Knights of the Shire and the burgesses were required to be elected, sometimes the vaguer form of "venire facias" was employed, and on more than one occasion the summoning of clerical proctors was dispensed with.

The important fact revealed by these documents, unexpectedly brought to light after lying unheeded for centuries within a stone's-throw of the chamber to which they refer, is that, so early as 1275, Edward I, when he had only been on the throne for three years, had improved upon De Montfort's original idea of a summons to each borough through its mayor; that is to say, that in the form which Parliament finally assumed the representatives of the town were summoned through the sheriff of the shire.

The Parliament of 1295, which has been called the "Model Parliament," marked the end of the experimental

[1] Of 1295.

stage and the definite and permanent establishment of an assembly comprising the three estates of the realm. For while in the reign of King John, and at the accession of Henry III, the legislative assembly of the kingdom convened for the purpose of granting aids to the Crown may be deemed to have been wholly constituted by tenure, in and after 1295 it is clear that tenure did not constitute the qualification by which members of the Commons sat. Their qualification was henceforth constituted by election, and the earlier constitution of a legislature wholly by tenure was superseded. Besides the Lords and Prelates were now regularly included the proctors of each cathedral diocese, two knights from each shire, two citizens from each city, and two burgesses from each borough.

At the present day, when the powers and constitution of the House of Lords are being closely scrutinised, it is well to remember that in those far-off Plantagenet times the non-hereditary element in the Upper House amounted to nearly a moiety of the whole body, a condition which continued until the reign of Henry VIII. The composition of the House of Commons which met at Westminster in November, 1295, though presumably based upon the distribution of the existing population, was remarkable (with certain exceptions, to be noted hereafter) for the preponderance of representatives from the southern and western shires. It numbered 292 members. Of these no less than 219 represented the towns, whilst only 73 Knights of the Shire were returned.[1]

[1] In the Parliament of 1298 appear for the first time in the official returns the names of the two members for the City of London. Westminster did not obtain separate representation until the first year of Edward VI.

Cornwall, the county which in after years enjoyed the unenviable reputation of possessing the greatest number of rotten boroughs within its borders, had thus early five representative towns, Bodmin, Launceston, Liskeard, Tregony, and Truro. Dorset had four, Somerset five, Devonshire and Sussex six each, Hampshire nine, and Wiltshire, where no doubt the influence of the great territorial family of Hungerford was paramount, no less than thirteen! North of the Trent, the part of the kingdom which returned the greatest number of borough members was, as might have been expected, the county of York, which had eleven representatives, Worcester coming next to it with seven. It has, unfortunately, been impossible to discover the name of the Procurator, for such was the title given by contemporary chroniclers to the earliest leaders of the Commons, who presided over the deliberations of this Mother of Parliaments.[1]

The transactions of the important constitutional assembly which met at Westminster in February, 1304–5, have been analysed by the late Professor Maitland in his masterly introduction to the *Memoranda de Parliamento*.[2] The representatives of the people then dealt with many subjects, and amongst others the impending subjugation of Scotland. They even concerned themselves with the internal affairs of Ireland; two natives of the sister isle actually petitioning the King to be placed under English rule.

No presiding officer can be positively identified as having been chosen in 1304–5, but from the list of names

[1] The title of Procurator, one still retained by Convocation, was applied to Trussell, who exercised many of the functions associated with the Speaker's office, in the reign of Edward II.

[2] Published in the Rolls Series in 1893.

preserved in the Public Records we gather that a Lowther sat as Knight of the Shire for Westmorland exactly six hundred years before a member of the same ancient Northern family was raised to the Chair.[1] The deficiencies of the printed Rolls of Parliament, the work in the first instance of the Clerks in Chancery, are both numerous and regrettable. Chiefly concerned as they are with Petitions, to the exclusion of debate, there is some reason to believe that many interesting details of the ordinary routine of Parliament in the days of its youth remain unedited and undigested in the national archives.

Valuable as are the six folio volumes printed between 1767 and 1777, their editors only made selections from a mass of available material. Historical research at the close of the eighteenth century had not attained to the high level reached in our own day by Professor Maitland and other labourers in the same field, and it is much to be desired that the entire series of Chancery Rolls should be edited afresh and printed *in extenso* in English, after the thorough manner adopted in the case of the Registers of the Privy Council. To these should be added a transcript of the various forms of Parliamentary Writs and a précis of all such documents in the Public Record Office as relate to the early history of both branches of the legislature.

Much divergence of opinion prevails amongst constitutional writers as to the actual date of the separation of the two Houses. Hakewil, who wrote in 1641, possibly had access to documentary evidence no longer extant, and he maintained that they deliberated apart, or that at all events they gave their assents separately,

[1] The Right Hon. James William Lowther was first elected Speaker in 1905.

so early as 1260, and Sir Edward Coke asserted that he had seen contemporary evidence which proved that the separation of the two bodies took place at the desire of the Commons.[1] But as there is no evidence in existence to show that the Parliaments held before 1264–65 included a more popular element than the Barons and Prelates, it seems safer to assume that the division into two Houses did not actually take place until early in the reign of Edward III.[2]

Throughout this reign the Rolls record regulations for the maintenance of order within the Palace of Westminster during the sitting of Parliament. In 1331–32 it was declared that "Our Lord the King forbids, on pain of imprisonment, any child or other person from playing at bars[3] or other games, the taking off of men's caps, laying hands on them, or otherwise preventing them from peacefully following their occupations in any part of the Palace of Westminster during the sitting of Parliament."[4]

[1] See Howell's *State Trials*, Vol. XIII, p. 1410, in which a report of Coke's of XII James I (1614) is quoted.

[2] In 1332, and again in 1339, the Lords and Commons undoubtedly made separate grants. These distinct grants imply separate grantors, and it is safe to assume that after 1332 a permanent union of knights and burgesses was effected. See *Rolls of Parliament*, Vol. II, pp. 66 and 104. An ingenious view, supported by a considerable section of well-informed opinion, is that although the Lords and the Commons met together in Westminster Hall, or some other apartment in the Palace, on the opening day of a new Parliament, it has not been conclusively proved that they, at any time, deliberated in the same chamber.

[3] Bares.

[4] *Rot. Parl.*, VI Edward III, p. 64. The words of the original Norman-French are worth quoting: "N^re Seigneur le Roi defend sur peyne d'emprisonement que nul enfaunt ne autres ne jue en ul lieu du Paleys de Westminster, durant le Parlement q y est somons, a bares ne as autres jues, ne a ouster Chaperouns des gentz, ne mettre mayn en eux, ne autre empeschement fais p qoi chescun ne puisse peysiblement sure ses basoignes.

The precise nature of the game of "bares," to which the youth of Westminster were addicted, cannot now be stated, but it was probably some form of a game known in later times as French and English or prisoner's base. The snatching of men's caps, and other forms of rough horse-play were the traditional recreations of the idle apprentice. Nearly six hundred years later the police are directed, at the beginning of each session, to secure free access to members repairing to the Palace of Westminster, though it is no longer necessary to issue regulations as to the playing of games within the precincts of Parliament.

When the Knights of the Shire first obtained representation at Westminster they acted with the Barons rather than with the citizens and burgesses, and it was not until the country gentry were fused with the new blood imported by the inclusion of the burgesses that an estate of the realm which, in the fullness of time, was destined to become the predominant partner in the Constitution, became an established fact.

Though there is conclusive proof of the Commons being thanked by the King for their services in 1304–5,[1] this does not necessarily imply that they had finally separated from the Lords, and when in 1315 one William de Ayremine, a Clerk in Chancery, was deputed by the Crown to note the business in Parliament he probably recorded the doings of both Lords and Commons. Another of this name was secretary to Edward II in 1325–26.

The Parliament held at York in May, 1322, obtained from Edward II an acknowledgment of the supremacy of a complete representative assembly. This declaration, entered on the Rolls, virtually amounted to a

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. I, p. 159.

written Constitution, and made it abundantly clear that, for the future, "all matters to be established for the estate of our Lord the King and his heirs, and for the estate of the realm and of the people" should require the consent of the prelates, the earls and barons, and the Commonalty of the realm. No mention is made at this time of the Knights of the Shire, who probably continued to act with the Barons until after 1332.[1]

In 1330 the Upper House had its own clerk.[2] Sire Henry de Edenestowe was the first to be appointed to the honourable position of Clerk of the Parliaments. Apparently it was from the first an office of profit under the Crown, for in 1346 the King required a loan of £100 from him![3] Not until 1388, when John de Scardesburgh was chosen, does history record the appointment of a similar officer for the Commons, yet as he was established in office at that date it is reasonable to infer that his post existed previously.

Turning aside from the conditions under which the Lower House first met at Westminster, its earliest presiding officers claim attention at our hands. The great names of Montfort, Trussell, Beaumont, Scrope, De la Mare, and Hungerford, six of the very flower of England, are associated with the popular assembly in the first years of its existence, and those, scarcely less considerable, of Pickering, Guildesborough, Waldegrave, and Bussy, completing the catalogue of Plantagenet Speakers, are all known to have played some part in the history of the country. The memory of others who filled the Chair in the turbulent times of the fourteenth century has been

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. I, p. 456. [2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 52.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 454.

obliterated in the course of the centuries which have elapsed since they voiced the opinion of the representatives of the people in free Parliament assembled. England then, as now, was governed by opinion rather than by acts of despotism, as Sir Robert Peel was wont to remark. Peter de Montfort is said[1] to have consented "*vice totius communitatis*" to the banishment of Aymer de Valence, Bishop-Elect of Winchester and half-brother to Henry the Third. These were the identical words made use of by Speaker Tiptoft in 1405–6, when he signed and sealed the entail to the Crown,[2] and yet the word *communitas* as applied by Peter de Montfort may only have been intended to convey a collective body of Crown vassals, whereas, in the latter instance, the Speaker undoubtedly referred to the House of Commons as a separate entity.

The sole authority for Hakewil's statement is the Register Book of St. Alban's Abbey, formerly in the Cottonian Library, and, as he refers to the actual page,[3] it appears that both he and Sir Symonds D'Ewes, who also quotes the Register, saw it with their own eyes. But it cannot now be traced in the British Museum, and it is to be feared that this valuable manuscript must have perished in the fire which destroyed 100 volumes of the Cottonian Collection in 1731, and rendered a like number illegible. In 1259 Pope Alexander IV was striving with all his might to procure the recall of Aymer de Valence from exile, but the answer which Peter de Montfort transmitted to Rome was couched in these uncompromising terms :—

[1] Again on the authority of Hakewil.
[2] VII and VIII Henry IV.
[3] Folio 207.

"Si Dominus Rex et Regni majores hoc vellent, communitas tamen, ipsius ingressorum in Anglia, jam nullatenus sustineret." [1]

From the date given by Hakewil,[2] it seems not unlikely that Peter de Montfort may have acted as presiding officer of the so-called "Mad Parliament" of 1258, when he was undoubtedly one of the twelve nominees of the Baronial, as opposed to the Court, party, entrusted with the duty of carrying out the great work of reform known to our forefathers as the "Provisions of Oxford." But, as has already been pointed out, the Knights of the Shire and the burgesses were not represented in the Parliament of 1258, therefore Peter de Montfort can only have acted as the spokesman of a restricted assembly of Barons and Prelates, nor was there any Parliament actually in session at the time of his protest against the recall of Aymer de Valence. To the Provisions of Oxford Henry III published his adhesion in the first known English Proclamation, and a copy of it still exists at Oxford. It is written chiefly in the Midland dialect and there is not a single French word in it. Probably Simon de Montfort felt the need of appealing to the nation at large, and this English confirmation of the royal acquiescence was duplicated by his orders in the Latin and French tongues.

One would naturally like to connect the name of the first Parliamentary spokesman with that of the great Simon, the originator of the principle of the House of Com-

[1] For an account of the whole circumstances attending Aymer de Valence's banishment, see Gasquet's *Henry III and the Church*, 1905, pp. 320–3.

[2] The forty-fourth year of Henry III.

mons, if not its actual inventor; and some writers have gone so far as to assert that Peter was his son, and that, like his better-known father, he was killed at the battle of Evesham. But, unfortunately for the holders of this theory, it does not anywhere appear that Simon had a son called Peter. He was, in greater likelihood, Baron of Beaudesert, and of Henley in Arden, in the county of Warwick, and of a family not known to have been nearly related to the great Earl of Leicester. One of the same name, a possible relative of Simon, fought and fell at Evesham, but if, as seems certain, the earliest Parliamentary spokesman on record came of the Warwickshire stock, his death did not take place till twenty years later.[1]

We have no certain knowledge of the individuals who acted as Procurator in any of the sessions known to have been held between 1261 and 1325, yet in all of them there must have been some presiding officer, some intermediary between Parliament and the Crown. But when the last Parliament summoned by Edward the Second is reached there is documentary evidence of a Parliamentary leader who achieved sufficient notoriety to be honoured at his death by burial in Westminster Abbey, a distinction, by the way, which has been conferred on but very few of his successors in the Chair. This was William Trussell,[2] who acted as "Procurator totius Parliamenti"[3] on the deposition of Edward the

[1] See G. E. C.'s *Complete Peerage* under the title *Montfort*, where the date of his death is given as 1284.

[2] Trussell's name is not to be found in the Return of Members' Names in 1326–27, though he had been a Knight of the Shire for Leicester in 1314. Like Peter de Montfort, he probably attended Parliament in the capacity of a Minor Baron.

[3] Henry of Knighton's Chronicle, contained in Twysden's *Decem Scriptores*, 1652, p. 2549.

Second at Kenilworth, and the same man whom Marlowe refers to in his play of *Edward II* :—[1]

"My Lord, the Parliament must have present news, and therefore say, will you resign or not?"

Apparently Trussell acted in a similar capacity in the reign of Edward the Third, for in 1340 he announced a naval victory to the House,[2] and was specially mentioned in the Rolls as undertaking to raise wools for the King's aid.

The Parliament which assembled at Westminster, "a la quinzeine de la Seint Michel," in 1339,[3] whether it was presided over or not by Trussell, was one of exceptional interest and importance, although its proceedings have received very scant attention at the hands of constitutional writers. John Stratford, the Archbishop of Canterbury, came from overseas with a message from the King to his Parliament; the Proclamation calling the Lords and Commons together was made in the Great Hall, and the cause of summons made no secret of the fact that the King was in urgent need of a great sum of money for the defence of the realm.

The Abbot of Westminster, Thomas Henley, Monsieur Hugh le Despencer, Monsieur Gilbert Talbot, Monsieur Robert de l'Isle, and Monsieur William de la Pole are amongst those specially named in the Rolls as assenting forthwith to the granting of a sum sufficient to meet the King's necessities, "ou autrement il serroit honiz [shamed] & deshonurez et lui et son poeple destruyt à tous jours." But when Parliament came to consider the method of

[1] Act V, scene 17.
[2] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 118.
[3] XIII Edward III.

raising the necessary supplies, there occurred one of those marked divergences of opinion between the two Houses which occasionally agitate the public mind in the twentieth as in the fourteenth century.

In 1339 the Lords consented to grant the King the tenth sheaf of all the corn in their demesnes, except of their bound tenants, the tenth fleece of the wool, and the tenth lamb of their own store, to be paid within two years. To this they attached a proviso to the effect that the great burden proposed to be laid upon wool ought to be revoked at no distant date, and that the grant should not be turned into a custom. But the Commons, when asked for an equivalent levy, made answer that before they were prepared to assent to this novel taxation they desired to consult their constituents, and, in effect, they prayed the King to dissolve the Parliament and call another to decide the question. *Mutatis mutandis*, the *impasse* in 1339 was not dissimilar to the deadlock of 1909, though, whereas in the former year the Commons desired to take the opinion of the country before agreeing to a new form of taxation, in 1909 it was the Upper House which refused to pass the Budget of the year without first referring it to the judgment of the people. The whole record on the Rolls is of such historical importance that no apology is needed for reproducing *in extenso* the answer of the Commons :—

" Et ceux de la Commune donnerent lour respons en un autre cedule, contenante la fourme souuzescrite.

" Seignurs, les gentz q sount cy a ce Parlement pur la Commune ount bien entendu l'estat nr̃e Seignur le Roi, et la graunt necessite q'il ad d'estre aide de son poeple ; et molt sount leez de cuer, & grantment confortez de ce

q'il est tant alez avant en les busoignes queles il ad empris, a l'honur de lui, & salvacion de son poeple ; et prient a Dieu q'il lui doigne grace de bien continuer & victorie de ses enemys a l'honur de lui, & salvacion de sa terre. Et quant a la necessite q'il ad d'estre aide de son poeple, les gentz de la Commune qi sount cy scievent bien q'il covient estre aidez grauntement, et sount en bone volente de la faire, si come ils ount este touz jours devant ces houres. Mes pur ceo q'il covient q l'aide soit graunt, en ce cas ils n'osoront assentir tant q'ils eussent conseillez & avysez les Communes de lour pais. Parquoi prient les ditz gentz q cy sount pur les Communes a Monseigneur le Duc, & as austres Seigñ q cy sount, q'il lui pleise somondre un autre Parlement au certein jour covenable, et en le meen temps chescun se trerra vers son pais, & promettent loiaument, en la ligeance q'ils deyvent a nr̃e Seignur le Roi, q'ils mettront tut la peine q'ils purront chescun devers son pais pur aver aide bon et covenable pur nr̃e Seignur le Roi, et quident, od l'aide de Dieu, bien exploiter. Et prient outre, qe Brief soit mande a chescun Viscont d'Engleterre, q̃ deux de mielx vanez Chivalers des Contez soient esluz & enviez at preschein Parlement pur la Commune, si qe nul de eux soit Viscomt ne autre ministre." [1]

It would seem that the request of the Commons was granted, for the King called a new Parliament to assemble at Westminster only three months later. On this occasion the infant Black Prince was the nominal guardian of the kingdom in his father's absence, while the administration of the country really lay in the hands of the Council.

Three years later, in 1343, the Rolls relate : " Et puis vindrent les Chivalers de Counteez et les Communes et

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 104, 1339, XIII Edward III.

repondirent par Monsr William Trussell en la dite Chambre blanche" to a communication from the Pope. Dean Stanley says that he was buried in the Abbey in 1364, but, if the statement in G. E. C.'s *Peerage* that he died before 1346 is correct, Stanley's note is in all probability a misprinted date. Trussell's tomb was in St. Michael's Chapel under the image of St. George. A foliated cross remaining in the pavement may be his memorial, for, though the slab has long been supposed to mark the resting-place of one of the Abbots, a herald's roll of the reign of Edward III records that: "Monsire William Trussell port d'argent une crois de gules les bouts floretes," [1] which accords with the blazon on the stone at Westminster. The Rolls record the names of one or two more Parliamentary spokesmen of early date, though the constituencies they represented are not now in all cases to be ascertained.

Of the Parliament which met at Westminster 16 March, 1331–32, we read: "Lesqueux Contes Barons et autres Grantz puis revindrent et repondirent touz au Roi par la bouche [de] Monsr Henri de Beaumont." And in the next Parliament Sir Geoffrey Le Scrope, the King's Chief Justice, is mentioned as acting in the same capacity. Both Beaumont and Scrope, and probably others, were,

[1] Though summoned to a Council in 1341–42, Trussell was never a Peer of Parliament, as has been supposed by Burke and other genealogical writers. The family owned property in the county of Stafford, and other large estates in the neighbourhood of Windsor formerly belonging to Oliver of Bordeaux. Their armorial bearings are still to be seen in a south window of the beautiful Decorated chancel of Warfield Church, an old forest parish in Berkshire. Though styled "Monsieur" in the Rolls, Trussell was made a Knight of the Bath on 22 May, 1306, unless this was another man of the same name. Shottesbrooke Church, also in Windsor Forest, was built by one of the same family.

however, almost certainly the mouthpieces of both Houses rather than the especial servants of the Commons. It now became customary for the Chief Justice to declare the cause of summons at the opening of a new Parliament, and instances are cited by Elsynge of this being done by William Thorpe, Sir William Shareshull, and Henry Green. Occasionally the King's Chamberlain acted as his deputy.[1] Elsynge, however, misconceived the true functions of the individual selected by the Crown to declare the cause of summons, and he was quite wrong in assuming that the Chief Justice performed duties analogous to those of the modern Speaker. All the evidence which exists goes to prove that the Commons had not as yet acquired the right of electing the Speaker of their free choice.

It has often been stated in print that the Commons, from the time when they began to deliberate apart, were in the habit of assembling in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. This building was begun about 1250, but it was certainly not finished in 1256, when Dean Stanley states that the Commons met in it. He also stated that the "Commons of London," a rather

[1] XXV Edward III, 1351–52. "The cause of summons was declared by William de Shareshull, Chief Justice, and receivers and triers of petitions being read, he willed the Commons to put their advice in writing, and deliver it to the King, so that he was Speaker."

XXIX Edward III. "The Chief Justice declared that the King's pleasure was that the cause of summons should be declared by Monsieur Walter de Manny, and so it was. Yet the Chief Justice managed the Parliament business as Speaker, for presently after Mons[r] Manny his discourse, he willed the Commons to advise thereof. Here you see the Chief Justice ranked first above the Lords in delivering their votes, so that it is plain the Chief Justice managed the Parliament business as Speaker appointed by the King, and that he did execute the office (not supply the place) of the Chancellor therein."—Elsynge's *Manner of Holding Parliaments in England*, 1768 edition, pp. 138–46.

vague term, assembled in the cloisters in 1263, yet in neither of these years was there a Parliament summoned. Other writers give 1282, when Ware was Abbot, as the year in which the Chapter House was first so used; but, unfortunately for the holders of this theory, no Parliament is known to have been summoned to meet at Westminster between 1275 and 1290, though an informal assembly of ecclesiastical and civil magnates was held there on 23 April, 1286.

A careful study of the Rolls will show that these several assumptions are based upon a misapprehension of the facts. The Commons' first known place of assembly apart from the Lords was the Painted Chamber, and they met in it at least as early as the Easter Parliament of 1343.[1] This apartment was in close proximity to the White Hall, or Chambre Blanche, in which the Peers and Prelates were accustomed to meet. Moreover, at the beginning of the fourteenth century relations between the King and the Abbot were very strained, and after a robbery of the Royal Treasury, to be mentioned hereafter, the Abbot of Westminster and many of his monks were committed to the Tower of London. In 1348 came the Black Death, which reduced the income of the monastery almost to vanishing point.

Not until 1351–52 is there any mention in the Rolls of the Commons deliberating in the Chapter House. But in that year Simon Langham was Abbot of Westminster, and it is conceivable that, owing to his interest with the King, they were then induced to forsake the Palace for a building not originally intended for lay purposes, and which lay under the iron rule of the most

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, pp. 136, 237*a*.

powerful ecclesiastic whom Westminster had yet known. From his great wealth (liberally expended on the fabric, both in his lifetime and after his decease), and his commanding personality, Simon Langham, Cardinal and Archbishop, came to be known as the third Founder of the Monastery on the Isle of Thorns.[1]

Like the earlier Simon, the still greater De Montfort, the Abbot of Westminster had his share in the development of Parliamentary institutions. Only a little while before the first definite association of the Commons with the Chapter House the representatives of the people had shown an inclination to find fault with the existing land laws, and Edward III may have thought the moment an opportune one for bringing the knights, citizens, and burgesses more directly under the influence of the Church. Yet in 1368, the forty-second year of Edward III, the Commons were back in the Palace, meeting in the Petite Salle, and the Lords in the Chambre Blanche.[2]

Abbot Langham, from his unique position at the head of a monastery with vast territorial possessions, was a most competent adviser of the Crown on all questions relating to the ownership of the soil, and, once within the sheltering walls of the sacred building, the earlier note of discontent amongst the Commons was hushed, at any rate for a time. Becoming Treasurer of England in 1360, Langham was Chancellor three years later, and in that capacity he declared the cause of summons (in the English language) at the opening of more than one

[1] Langham's benefactions rendered possible the completion of the cloisters and the nave, according to the unfinished designs of Henry III, and amounted to nearly a quarter of a million of money at the present computation of value.

[2] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 294.

Parliament. When, in 1366, he was promoted to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, he received the pallium from the Pope in the Royal Chapel of St. Stephen ; nor was this his last connection with the scene of his upbringing. From far-off Avignon, where the closing years of his life were spent, his heart always turned to the Isle of Thorns beside the Thames, and his body was brought back to be buried in the Chapel of St. Benedict, the especial resting-place of his Order, where to this day his stately monument, happily uninjured by the accidents of time, is conspicuous among the older ecclesiastical tombs in the Abbey over which he formerly ruled. The fact that Trussell was buried there at a time when the right of interment at Westminster was confined, almost without exception, to members of the Royal Family and to ecclesiastics of high degree is an additional proof, if any were needed, of the bond of union which existed between Church and State in the days of the Plantagenets. Moreover, Simon Langham, though not yet Abbot, was a prominent member of the great Benedictine Monastery at least as early as 1346, in which year Trussell is believed to have died, and it may have been owing to his intervention that a new precedent was set when a Parliamentary leader's bones were laid to rest at Westminster.

Amongst the Abbey MSS. there is an entry on the Sacrists' Roll of the year 1377–78, at which date Langham was dead and had been succeeded by Abbot Litlington, which refers to certain floor coverings which had been worn out by the fretful feet of the knights and burgesses in the course of a recent session. The monks, with the care which characterised all their doings, then took

note of "Mattis pro choro & Capitulo empt 16/8 quia tempore Parliamenti Mattæ erant destructæ." And, as there appears to be no earlier mention in the archives remaining in the custody of the Dean and Chapter of similar purchases for the use of the Commons, it seems reasonable to assume that the incomparable Chapter House, as it was called by Matthew Paris, was not habitually used for Parliamentary purposes before the middle of the fourteenth century.

There may have been isolated instances, owing to the close connection which existed between Henry III and the Abbey of his foundation, in which the Lords and Commons sitting together as one body assembled somewhere within the walls of St. Peter's at the earliest dawn of the English Constitution, but all the evidence goes to show that the Commons did not finally separate from the Lords until Langham sat in the Abbot's seat.

The removal of the representative Chamber from the disturbing influences of the Court to the austerer serenity of the Cloister having been found in practice to conduce to good order in debate, the Abbey became the usual home of the Commons during Litlington's beneficent rule in the Isle of Thorns, and entries in the Rolls show that they assembled in the Chapter House in 1376, 1377, 1384, and 1394–95. But the great statute of Præmunire,[1] which restrained the papal authority in England, was not, as supposed by Dean Stanley, enacted at Westminster, but at Winchester in the Parliament of 1393.

In the picturesque language of Sir Walter Besant, there lay on the other side of the wall which formed the eastern boundary of the Abbey:—

[1] XVI Richard II, c. 5.

"The Palace, the Court and Camp of the King, a place filled with noisy, racketing, even uproarious life. There were taverns without the Palace precincts where the noise of singing never ceased. There was the clashing of weapons; there were the profane oaths of the soldiers; there was the blare of trumpets; there were the pipe and tabor of the minstrels and the jesters. . . . Only a low wall between a world of action and the world of prayer." [1]

Besant emphasises the gloomy side of monastic life in the Isle of Thorns, but he might have added, with equal truth, that, within the jurisdiction of the Abbot, scenes of violence and disorder were of such frequent occurrence that for a man "to take Westminster" became in after years synonymous with his flight from justice.

It is one of the boasted advantages of our Parliamentary system that the Legislature is powerless to bind its successors, yet William of Colchester, who ruled over the Abbey in 1393, could hardly have foreseen that, within fifty years of the Commons accepting the shelter of the Church, measures limiting the power of its acknowledged head, though not within the walls of St. Peter's Monastery, would be debated and placed on the Statute Book.

The Chapter House can never have been a very suitable place for the sittings of Parliament. It was inconveniently situated for the purpose of rapid communication between the two Houses; it was required by the monks themselves every day of the week, and it is probable that the actual number of times when it was used by the Commons was much smaller than has been gene-

[1] *Westminster*, by Sir Walter Besant, 1897 edition, p. 88.

rally supposed. The use of this particular building may only have been extended to the Lower House by Abbots Langham, Litlington, and William of Colchester.

The Speaker would, no doubt, occupy the Abbot's stall facing the entrance door; whilst the knights and burgesses seated themselves, as best they could, in the eighty stalls of the monks. Late-comers would have to be contented with standing-room, though, as the attendance of the burgesses in the fourteenth century was never large and the sessions were of brief duration, no great inconvenience may have been caused. To the central pillar supporting the roof were attached placards having reference to the business to be discussed, though there were occasions on which mischievous hands affixed libellous documents in the same conspicuous position.[1]

But there was another, and even nobler, apartment in the monastery in which the Commons of England are known to have assembled. This was the great Refectory beyond the south cloister walk. Originally of Norman construction, it was consumed by fire in 1298, but promptly rebuilt, together with other domestic offices, under Abbot Langham and his successor. It was a rectangular hall of great magnificence, 130 feet long, nearly double the length of the existing House of Commons, and 38 feet broad. If Parliament is desirous of commemorating its former association with the Abbey, it would do well to restore, as far as possible, the ruined glories of Litlington's work. Its north wall still stands, together with some of the windows and the corbels of the roof; and on its inner face a portion of the Norman arcading of the earlier building may still

[1] *Archæologia*, Vol. XVI, 1812, pp. 80–83.

be seen. As rebuilt in the fourteenth century, it had a fine timber roof, from which hung a crown of lights the fall of which is mentioned by Caxton. Over the high table was a painting of Christ in majesty, an inspiring symbol of the union subsisting between Church and State.

The actual date at which it became ruinous is not known, but though the Commons assembled in it in 1397, 1403–4,[1] 1414, 1415, and 1416, during the whole of which period William of Colchester was Abbot of Westminster, the Rolls are silent as to the actual place of meeting after the last-mentioned date. It is almost certain that until the dissolution of the monasteries they occupied either the Little Hall or the Painted Chamber. They removed to St. Stephen's Chapel on its becoming vacant in 1547, never again to desert it except when directed to assemble at Oxford in the seventeenth century.

It would seem that too much importance has hitherto been attached to an entry in the Rolls of the year 1376, which speaks of the Chapter House as the "ancient place" of meeting for the Commons. All that the phrase was intended to convey was that, although earlier meetings had taken place within the Abbey precincts (one of them, as has been seen, in the Chapter House during the session of 1351–52), a return to the Palace had been made in 1368. Therefore, when in 1376—the year in which De la Mare first held an office practically indistinguishable from that of the later Speakers, though there is no mention in the Rolls of his having been then elected

[1] In 1413 the knights, citizens, and burgesses were only commanded to meet "en lour lieu accustume dens l'Abbeie de Westm[n] at sept del clokke a matyn pour eslier lour Commune Parlour, & de luy presenter au Roy a sept del clokke mesme le jour."—*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 3.

to the Chair by his fellow-members—the King directed the Commons to repair once more to the Chapter House, the officials whose duty it was to record the proceedings of Parliament were only desirous of showing that a precedent existed for the alteration in the rendezvous.

The Rolls do not specify the Chapter House as having been used for Parliamentary purposes after 1394–95. The Refectory was probably used in its stead until it fell into disrepair; but after the great fire in the Palace, which occurred in 1512, the chamber used by the Commons was found to be so inconvenient as to necessitate a temporary removal to Black Friars, and it was there, and not at Westminster, that Sir Thomas More was chosen Speaker in 1523.[1]

Whilst the Lords adhered to one of the chambers in the King's Palace, there may have been occasions when both Houses assembled in Westminster Hall in obedience to the King's summons. But there can be no doubt that after the middle of the fourteenth century the usual practice was for both bodies to deliberate apart and to transact business separately with each other and with the King. In 1362 the opening speech was for the first time delivered in English, though for long after the records continued to be kept in Norman-French.

In the "Good Parliament," which met at Westminster 28 April, 1376, the names of 117 members are known, of whom 73 sat for counties, and 44 for boroughs and cities. The foremost man returned to it was Sir Peter de la

[1] The Rolls in 1351–52 have an interesting note on the hour of meeting of the Commons in Plantagenet times. They were then directed to assemble in the Painted Chamber, "toust apres le soleil lever," a custom which it is sincerely to be hoped will not be revived in the twentieth century.

Mare, Knight of the Shire for Hereford, and Seneschal to Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, a connection which intensified the animosity of his relations to the House of Lancaster.[1]

Edward III, when well stricken in years, had fallen under the baneful influence of Alice Perrers, a squire's daughter whose rapacity and shamelessness as the King's mistress-in-chief is only paralleled by some of the especial favourites of Charles II and George IV. In one year the King, in his senile infatuation, spent many thousands of the public money in settling her jeweller's bill, besides making her large grants of land and constituting her the guardian of several rich orphans.[2] It became expedient for ambitious nobles to stand well with her, and even John of Gaunt took up her cause against the Black Prince. The financial exigencies of the Sovereign were now great, and the public dissatisfaction increased rapidly after the loss of all England's French possessions with the exception of Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne. The Commons grew uneasy concerning Alice's influence with the King, and when, emboldened by the success of her political intrigues, she appeared in Westminster Hall, and presumed to lecture the presiding judge on the duties of his office, the patience of the House was exhausted. In a long game of give-and-take between De la Mare and the King's mistress the former scored the first point when he discovered that Alice was married

[1] De la Mare was a man "fearless of consequences in an age of violence, one whose spirit imprisonment could not bend nor threats overpower."—Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, 1899.

[2] It is said that this insatiable *traviata* was with Edward III in his last moments, and that she even stole the rings from his fingers when he lay at the point of death.

and bore the legal title of Baroness of Windsor. The King swore that he knew nothing of the marriage, and Alice was expelled from Court. Moreover, in order to humour the Commons he gave his assent to an Ordinance whereby any woman thenceforward, and especially Alice Perrers, was forbidden to prosecute the suits of others in Courts of Justice, by way of maintenance.[1]

After protracted debates, both by themselves and in conjunction with the Lords, the Commons appeared in full Parliament with De la Mare at their head. His first duty was to answer the usual demand for money, made to the Lower House on this occasion by the Chancellor, Sir John Knyvet. Not only did De la Mare take upon himself to refuse supplies until the grievances of the nation were redressed, but he adopted the financial position as the text for a sermon on the required reforms.

Edward the Black Prince now lay a-dying at the Abbot of Westminster's manor-house of Neyte, in what is now Pimlico, and it was known that it was John of Gaunt's intention to secure for himself the succession to the throne. In the subsequent proceedings of the House, perhaps the most interesting to that date, De la Mare voiced the opinion of a nation more than he represented the views of any one party. He was, in fact, more of a Parliamentary autocrat, combining in his personality many of the attributes of Pym and Lenthall, than the mouthpiece of the Commons, and the Parliament which he dominated resembled, more perhaps than any of its successors down to the Revolution of 1688, the Parliament of to-day in the extent of its powers. In 1376 the Commons proceeded to impeach Lord Latimer, thus

[1] Hallam's *Middle Ages*, edition of 1834, Vol. III, p. 83.

affording the earliest recorded instance of a Minister of the Crown being arraigned by the Lower House.

For a time the fortunes of the contest inclined to the side of the reforming party in the Commons. But with the death of the Black Prince the supreme power once more fell into the hands of John of Gaunt, and a change quickly came over the scene. Alice Perrers reappeared openly at Court, De la Mare was imprisoned, without trial, in Nottingham Castle, and would have been put to death if the King's mistress could have had her way. Wykeham was deprived of his temporalities on a frivolous charge and banished from the precincts of the palace.

The new Parliament was controlled by John of Gaunt, who, by putting pressure upon the sheriffs, was able practically to pack the House with men of his own choosing. Yet some of De la Mare's old fellow-members managed to secure re-election, and though they promptly petitioned for his release, counter influences were too strong for them. One of the first acts of the reactionary assembly of 1376–77, usually known as the "Bad Parliament," was to reverse the sentence against Alice Perrers.

From the point of view of the Constitutional historian the Parliament is a memorable one, since in it the Speaker's office first emerged from the twilight which shrouds its origin into the full light of day. Summoned at the close of a year in which a King of England celebrated the jubilee of his reign, the House of Commons, for the first time in its history, is known to have been represented at Westminster by a presiding officer of its own choice. Sir Thomas Hungerford, specified in the Rolls as having "les paroles pour les Communes d'Engleterre

SIR THOMAS HUNGERFORD
1376-7
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

en cest Parlement," made a daring speech to the throne at the close of the session, calling the King's attention to various grievances and alleged infringements of the liberties of his subjects, both male and female.

This, the first recorded utterance of the House of Commons to find public expression through the mouth of its responsible president, has been strangely overlooked by Parliamentary historians, as has also the interesting fact that Hungerford, on the same occasion, delivered seven " Billes " to the Clerk of the Parliament, to which, alas for the budding hopes of the representatives of the people, the Lords vouchsafed no reply, " a cause q̂ le dit Parlement s'estoit departiz & finiz a mesme le jour devant q̂ rienz y fust plus fait a ycelles."

Sir Thomas Hungerford was the head of the powerful Wiltshire family which owned Farleigh Castle. Like Chaucer's Frankleyn, " full oft tyme he was a Knight of the Schire," for his career at Westminster extended over thirty-six years. He died in 1398, and was buried at Farleigh Hungerford, in Somerset, where his tomb and a portrait in a stained-glass window are still to be seen.[1]

On the death of the King, a new Parliament was called by Richard II, in October, and De la Mare, again the most prominent figure in the popular assembly, was voted to the Chair. The sentence of the Good Parliament against Alice Perrers was re-enacted and the power of John of Gaunt was finally broken.[2]

De la Mare again represented Herefordshire in 1379–80,

[1] See frontispiece to this volume.
[2] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 5.

1382, and 1383, after which date his name disappears from the page of history, nor has the year of his death been ascertained.

Sir James Pickering, the head of a great Westmorland family, became Speaker in 1378.[1] His speech, asserting the right of free speech and declaring the loyalty of the House to the throne, remains upon the Rolls and is the first of its kind on record. It is interesting at the present day to recall the fact that Speaker Pickering's wife was a Lowther. To him succeeded Sir John Guildesborough, Knight of the Shire for Essex, in the Parliament which met at Northampton on 5 November, 1380. This Speaker set an important precedent which, to a certain extent, foreshadowed the modern procedure in Committee of Supply. He demanded of the Crown that a schedule of the exact sums needed, and the purposes for which they were required, should be laid before the Commons. Thus the annually recurring phrase in the King's speech "estimates for the expenditure of the year will in due course be laid before you," is the logical outcome of a procedure adopted more than five hundred years ago.

The Eastern Counties also supplied the next Speaker, Sir Richard Waldegrave of Smallbridge, Suffolk, ancestor of the present Earl Waldegrave. He begged to be excused from accepting the post, but the King charged him on his allegiance that since he was already chosen by his colleagues he should execute the office. His is the first instance of a Speaker declining appointment, and for generations after his day a similar formal excuse was put forward, only to be refused, nor was the pre-

[1] "Monsieur James de Pekeryng Chivaler, q'avoit les paroles de la cõe faisant sa Protestation si bien pur lui mesmes come pur toute la Coc d'Engl illoeq's assemble."—*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 34.

SIR THOMAS HUNGERFORD
1376-7
From a drawing by Stanley North of the monumental effigy in the chapel at Farleigh Castle

cedent set in 1381 broken until the reign of Charles II, when Sir Edward Seymour, who had been chosen against the King's wish, merely said, on presenting himself for approval in the House of Lords: "The House of Commons have unanimously elected me their Speaker, and now I come hither for Your Majesty's approbation, which if Your Majesty will please to grant, I shall do them and you the best service I can." The Chancellor had been instructed to express the King's acceptance of the customary excuse, but the Speaker's unexpected utterance took him so aback that he could only falter out that the King wished to reserve him for other services and desired that the Commons would make another choice. After a heated discussion and a prorogation a compromise was arrived at, but the important principle was established that the Crown has a right to veto, but not to dictate, the Commons' choice.

Sir Richard Waldegrave's motive, as far as it is possible to analyse it, appears to have been a prudential one. Grave disputes were likely to arise between Parliament and the people respecting the enfranchisement of the villeins to whom Richard II had lately granted charters of freedom. But as the King contended that these charters had been extorted from him when he was not seized of his full kingly power, he ultimately revoked them. Waldegrave may have been apprehensive of the consequences likely to result from this evasion, hence his desire to be relieved of the post.[1]

From 1383, when Pickering was called to the Chair for the second time, the Rolls of Parliament are defective for

[1] See the *Scrope and Grosvenor Roll*, Vol. II, p. 374, and *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 100.

about ten years, though it is highly probable that he again acted as Speaker in one or other of the Parliaments held in 1384, 1388, 1389–90, 1390, and 1397–98, in all of which he is known to have sat for Yorkshire.

The last, and in some respects the most notorious of Plantagenet Speakers was Sir John Bussy, or Bushey, the first man to be twice elected to the Chair, and also the first to be alluded to by Shakespeare.[1] He represented Lincolnshire (where his family owned land at a place called Grentewell, at Domesday), between 1383 and 1397–98. He was first chosen Speaker in 1393–94, re-elected in January, 1396–97, and again in September, 1397.[2] During his second term of office occurred the important case of Privilege arising out of the trial of Sir Thomas Haxey, a prebendary of Southwell and proctor of the Clergy attending Parliament. Haxey introduced a Bill or rather an article in a Bill complaining of maladministration, and making specific charges of extravagance against the King. Richard II, when he heard of it, called upon the Speaker to give up the name of the person responsible for the introduction of the obnoxious measure. The Commons were alarmed and made a scapegoat of Haxey. He was adjudged a traitor and condemned to death, his trial taking place in the Salle Blanche of the Palace. He was eventually pardoned, and in Henry IV's first Parliament the judgment was formally reversed. Haxey, who was an ecclesiastical pluralist of an extreme type, became Treasurer of York and was a benefactor to the Cathedral, in which he was buried in 1425.

[1] He is styled "Commune Parlour" in the Rolls.

[2] He was probably Speaker also in the twenty-third Parliament of Richard II, 1394–95; but the Rolls are defective at that period.

Hakewil calls Bussy "a special minion to the King," but this appears to have been a prejudiced opinion. On the landing of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, at Ravenspur, where the whole countryside greeted him with acclamation, Bussy took possession of the Castle at Bristol with others of Richard's ministers.

"To Bristol Castle, which they say is held by Bussy, Bagot and their complices." [1]

A little later in the same play Shakespeare writes slightingly of him as—

"A caterpillar of this Commonwealth which I [2] have sworn to weed and pluck away."

On the surrender of Bristol to the invader, Bussy, with the Lord Treasurer (William Le Scrope, Earl of Wiltshire), and Sir Henry Green were executed without trial,[3] as the first act of the new dynasty. Thus, with the possible exception of Peter de Montfort, whose end is somewhat of a mystery, the last of the Plantagenet Speakers was also the first to die a violent death, a fate which, as subsequent chapters will show, was to befall many of his successors in the Chair of the Commons. Within six weeks of Bussy's murder Henry reached London, bringing Richard with him captive, and took up his abode in St. John's Priory in Clerkenwell.

On 29 September, the day before the intended meeting of Parliament, he had an interview with his cousin in the Tower. Having obtained from him the crown and sceptre, the outward symbols of kingship which counted for so much with the populace, he hurriedly deposited

[1] Shakespeare, *Richard II*, act II, scene 3, line 164.
[2] Bolingbroke. [3] 29 July, 1399.

them in the treasury of Westminster Abbey, now usually known as the Chapel of the Pyx.

This ancient building, which should not be confused with the Royal Jewel House of which there is an illustration in this book, undoubtedly formed part of the Confessor's foundation. It makes the proud claim, in common with an adjoining apartment long used as the gymnasium of Westminster School, to be the oldest building in London. Henry III spared it when he pulled down the Confessor's Church, and in it, or in the undercroft of the Chapter House hard by, the kings of England kept the regalia and other treasures, of which a list is given by Dean Stanley. The advantage of having more than one such treasure-house—and if the Jewel Tower is reckoned there were three in close proximity to one another—is obvious ; because an intending thief would be unaware in which, for the moment, the royal wealth lay hid. But the utmost secrecy will not avail against treachery from within, and in 1303 the Chapel of the Pyx, or, as some think, the undercroft, was the scene of a great robbery. The sacristan of the Abbey and two monks were involved in the rifling of the treasury by one Richard Podlicote, who contrived by their help to force an entrance and to carry off articles of priceless value. A jury empanelled to investigate the crime found that Master William Torel, the famous English sculptor who made the effigies of Henry III and Eleanor which are still to be seen in the Abbey, bought two ruby rings in good faith from the thief, and the sacristan was found to have in his possession a bowl of unknown value which he could not account for. The manner of Podlicote's punishment is not certainly known, though it was long

believed that he was flayed alive. Some fragments of human skin adhering to one of the doors leading out of the east cloister walk have been thought to be his, though within the recollection of the present writer these remains, if human, indeed, they be, were confidently stated to have been portions of the skin of a Dane, executed as a terror to evil-doers at an even earlier date. The probability is that both stories are apocryphal. Towards the close of his ill-starred reign Richard II, who throughout his life had a graceful passion for extravagance, practically rebuilt Westminster Hall in the shape in which it now stands. Even the names of the royal craftsmen employed upon it are known. Robert Brassington made the shield-bearing angels of the incomparable roof. William Burgh filled the great window with "flourished glass"—would that it had escaped the ravages of time—and William Cleuderre sculptured some of the images of "grave kings" which still stand at the upper end of the hall.[1] By the irony of fate, no sooner was the vast building finished than it became the scene of Richard's deposition.

For in Westminster Hall Henry of Lancaster, aided by the dignitaries of the Church, including the Abbot of Westminster, came forward to "challenge the realm of England" on the last day of September, 1399.[2] Amongst the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum,[3] the collection of which England owes to a Speaker to be mentioned hereafter, is a representation by a Frenchman named Créton (who accompanied Richard on his last journey to Ireland), of the great hall as it appeared on this momentous day.

[1] The south porch was added by Sir Charles Barry after the great fire of 1834.

[2] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 422. [3] No. 1319, p. 57.

It shows the throne at the upper end unoccupied—"sede regali cum pannis Auri solempnitur præposita tunc vacua."[1]

Nearest to the throne stands Henry of Lancaster wearing a high-crowned cap of fur. On the right of the picture are grouped the spiritual, and, on the left, the temporal Lords and the Knights. All appear to be actual portraits, while the figures of two men in the foreground would seem from their dress to be officials. Neither of them can have been intended to represent the Speaker, for with Bussy dead, no presiding officer of the Commons existed. For two hundred years until that September day the doctrine of hereditary right to the throne had been preserved without interruption, but now in Richard's newly finished hall, far surpassing Rufus' original building and adorned from end to end with the white hart, the badge of his adoption, amidst a shout of acclamation which made the rafters ring, the Plantagenet dynasty passed away and a new era opened for England and for Parliament.[2]

[1] See reproduction of this curious painting in this volume.

[2] William Rufus and Henry I had obtained the throne in prejudice of the claims of their elder brother, Robert. Stephen had been advanced to the same dignity, contrary to every opinion of hereditary succession. John had been crowned in opposition to the claims of Arthur (the son of his elder brother); but from that time till the usurpation of Henry IV the principle of heredity had been strictly observed.

HENRY IV CLAIMING THE THRONE OF ENGLAND
From the Harleian Manuscripts

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES UPON PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS

(1399–1461)

THIRTY SPEAKERS

John Cheyne	Thomas Walton
John Dorewood	Richard Vernon
Arnold Savage	John Tyrrell
Henry Redford	William Alington
William Esturmy	John Bowes
John Tiptoft	William Burley
Thomas Chaucer	William Tresham
William Stourton	John Say
Walter Hungerford	John Popham
Richard Redman	William Oldhall
Walter Beauchamp	Thomas Thorpe
Roger Flower	Thomas Charlton
Roger Hunt	John Wenlock
Richard Baynard	Thomas Tresham
John Russell	John Green

WITH almost indecent haste Henry of Lancaster, after usurping the throne, proceeded to consolidate his position. The Parliament of Richard had come to an end with the abdication of the King, and within a week Henry issued writs for a new one returnable in six

days. These were not, and indeed could not be, complied with; but the same members who had deposed Richard met on 6 October and fixed the date of the usurper's coronation for eight days later.[1] Henry distributed the great offices of State amongst his personal friends, though little or no change seems to have been made in the composition of the judicial bench.

Proceeding from the Tower, where Richard was detained in close custody, on a triumphal progress through London, Henry slept for the first time in the Palace of Westminster on the night of 12 October, 1399.[2] On the following day he was crowned in the Abbey, with all the ancient ceremonial proper to the occasion, and exactly one year after he had fled the country in exile. During the Coronation banquet in Westminster Hall a fountain in Palace Yard ran continually with red and white wine; and Dymoke, the King's champion, who had acted the same part at Richard's accession, rode into the Hall and challenged any man to appear who dared maintain that Henry was not a lawful Sovereign.

The choice of the Commons for their Speaker fell upon Sir John Cheyne, or Cheney, Knight of the Shire for Gloucester, and on the morrow of the Coronation his nomination was approved by the King. But at once a hitch arose. For Cheyne was a renegade cleric, more than suspected of Lollardy by Archbishop Arundel, the new King's principal adviser at this juncture, and the

[1] 13 October.

[2] According to Froissart Henry of Lancaster was escorted by a cavalcade of 6000 horsemen as he rode bareheaded through the crowded streets. Having arrived at Westminster he bathed himself, and, on the morrow, confessed, as he had good need to do, hearing three masses.

man who more than any other had been instrumental in placing him on the throne. Cheyne only filled the chair for two days; and, on his making a convenient excuse of infirmity, the Commons elected John Dorewood, Knight of the Shire for Essex, in his stead.

Little or nothing is known of this Speaker or his family beyond the fact that his father had represented the same county in the reign of Edward III; but it is a singular coincidence that on the two occasions on which the son was called to the Chair—for he was again Speaker in the first Parliament of Henry V—he owed his election to the illness of the presiding officer first chosen by the Commons. In 1413 he replaced William Stourton, Knight of the Shire for Dorset, "being sick in his bed" and unable to execute the duties of the office.

To the despotic incapacity of Richard in his later years succeeded the energetic rule of a Sovereign driven by necessity to depend—at least, outwardly—upon constitutional methods. That this was the opportunity of the Commons, and one fully recognised by them, events soon showed. But the peculiar circumstances of the time also favoured the consolidation of the Peerage, inasmuch as the inheritable right of summons was now for the first time conceded in lieu of a mere summons by custom. If henceforth there could be no taxation without consent, legislation was in future to be based upon a mutual recognition of the rights of both Houses; and while a remarkable unanimity between Lords and Commons prevailed at this period, the right of the latter to vote subsidies and to co-operate in legislation coincided with the establishment of a permanent hereditary chamber acting in civil cases as an ultimate

Court of Appeal. Whereas Richard had succeeded in obtaining the subsidy on wool and a tax on movables for life, the first Parliament of Henry IV would not grant a subsidy for more than three years. The Parliament which assembled at Westminster in January, 1400–1, proved more complaisant, and the utmost harmony prevailed between the two Houses. At the end of the session the Commons, addressing the King through the mouth of their Speaker, Sir Arnold Savage, sought to draw a parallel, more curious than convincing, between the achievements of a loyal and united Parliament and the observance of the Mass.[1]

Henry IV set an entirely new precedent, and one which has never been repeated, when, in 1402, he invited the Commons to dine with him at the close of the session.[2] Sir Henry Redford, Knight of the Shire for Lincoln, was Speaker when this novel bid for popularity was made. The Earl of Northumberland, in the absence of the King's Seneschal, begged the whole of the Lords spiritual and temporal, as well as the Commons, to assemble on Sunday, 26 November, the business of Parliament having come to an end on the previous day, in order to enjoy the King's hospitality. The place of meeting, though not specified in the Rolls, must almost certainly have been Westminster Hall, as no other apart-

[1] "Au fyn de chescun messe y Covient de dire: 'Ite missa est' & 'Deo gratias.'" Semblablement les Communes, Coment ils feurent Venuz al fyn del messe pur dire: "Ite missa est." Et qu'ils, & tout le Roialme, feurent espalement tenuz de dire cel parol: "Deo gratias." *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 466.

[2] In this session also occurred an early instance of the thanks of Parliament being awarded to a general (the Earl of Northumberland) for his military achievements (*Rot. Parl.*, 16 October, 1402).

ment in the Palace could have accommodated so large a number at a banquet.[1]

Advocates of a single Chamber system will note with approval this reunion of the two Houses "en pleine Parlement," although in 1402 it was contrived for a purely social purpose. It has been thought that by somewhat similar means a Government, unsympathetic to the hereditary principle, but commanding, as in 1833 and again in 1906, an overwhelming majority in the Lower House, might despite the existing veto of the House of Lords ensure the passage of its legislative and financial proposals, were the two Chambers or a committee elected by both Peers and Commoners to meet as one deliberative body, in cases where a deadlock has arisen. It may strike the impartial student of constitutional practice as somewhat surprising that a proposal to revert to conditions known to have prevailed under the Plantagenets should be seriously entertained in the twentieth century, but the fact remains that a return to such a method of amicably settling disputes between the two Houses has recently found considerable support in the country, and that a section of moderate opinion inclines to the belief that by some such means a final solution of an admitted difficulty may be within measurable distance.

In 1404, when Sir Arnold Savage, Knight of the Shire for Kent, and the strongest man who had filled the Chair since De la Mare, was again Speaker, the subsidies granted,

[1] "Le Cont de Northumberland, en absence du Seneschall de l'ostiel du Roi, pria as toutz les Seigneurs Espirituels & Temporelx, & as toutz les Communes suis ditz, d'estre le Dymenge ensuant a mangier ovesq le Roi nře Seigneur." Unfortunately no description of this unique gathering seems to have been preserved.

liberal though they were, were voted subject to the novel condition that the money raised should be received by Treasurers by whose appointment Parliament could feel confidence that the supplies should not be misappropriated. Savage, who has been called "the great comprehensive symbol of the English people," made, on his elevation to the Chair, a more elaborate complimentary address to the King than any of his predecessors, yet in the first of the two Parliaments which Henry called in 1404[1] he formulated petitions to the effect that redress of grievances should precede the granting of supplies.

This uncompromising attitude was due to the fact that a modified income-tax was sought to be imposed on all owners of land and house property, and a contemporary historian spoke of the tax as a novel one, "galling to the people and highly oppressive." So long as the incidence of taxation was designed to fall on commodities, it could be cheerfully borne, but when it was applied to individuals a new grievance was created.

After a delay of six weeks the Commons consented to levy a tax of a shilling in the pound on land value, but only on the understanding that it should not be construed into a precedent, and that no official record of it should be preserved. It reads almost like the twentieth century to find this subsidy described by one chronicler as *taxa nova et exquisita*, and by another as *taxa insolita et incolis tricabilis et valde gravis*. Notwithstanding the unpopularity of land taxation, it

[1] It met at Westminster, 14 January, 1404, and remained in session till the second week in April.

Orate spialit' p aiab; dñi Arnoldi ſ auage' qui
obiit in Vigil' sñi Andree Apli Anno dñi mill'mo CCCC° decimo
et dña Johanna quondam Uxor ejus quor aiabz ppiet' de' amē

SIR ARNOLD SAVAGE
1400-1, 1403-4
From a brass in S. Chancel of Bobbing Church, Kent

was again imposed in a later Parliament at the rate of 6*s.* 8*d.* on every £20 of income from land. A valuation list for the City of London and the suburbs was prepared by a Commission over which the Lord Mayor presided. It was found that the gross rental amounted to £4220 divided amongst 1132 individuals or institutions, while the actual yield was only £70 6*s.* 8*d.*

Walter Savage Landor, who believed himself to be a lineal descendant of Sir Arnold, introduced an ingenious duologue between the Speaker and the King on the subject of this tax into his *Imaginary Conversations* :—

> " Henry IV to the Speaker : This morning in another place thou declaredst that no subsidy should be granted me until every cause of public grievance was removed."

To which Savage diplomatically made answer :

> " I am now in the house of the greatest man upon earth. I was then in the house of the greatest nation."

Henry then went on to say :

> " I raised up the House of Commons four years ago, and placed it in opposition to my barons, with trust and confidence that I might be less hampered in my complete conquest of France. . . . Parliament speaks too plainly and steps too stoutly for a creature of four years' growth."

Savage :

> " God forbid that any King of England should achieve the conquest of all France ! "

A little later he advises the King "to keep the hearts of his subjects. . . ."

> "Wars are requisite to diminish the power of your barons by keeping them long and widely separate from the main body of retainers."
>
> "In general they[1] are the worthless exalted by the weak, and dangerous from wealth ill acquired and worse expended."
>
> "The whole people is a good King's household, quiet and orderly when well treated, and ever in readiness to defend him against the malice of the disappointed, the perfidy of the ungrateful, and the usurpation of the familiar. Act in such guise, and I will promise you the enjoyment of a blessing to which the conquest of France in comparison is as a broken flagstaff—self-approbation in government and security in power."

On which the King declared that he wished he could make the Speaker a peer.[2] Savage was a party to the passing of the famous enactment, "De hæretico comburendo," which first made religious error an offence against the statute law. It had been a punishable offence before, since a renegade clerk was condemned by the Church court in 1222, and then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt. Even Sawtre was burnt in 1401, before "De hæretico comburendo" was passed.

This was the statute which Gardiner and Bonner found so convenient during the Marian persecution of 150 years later. In his second Speakership Savage

[1] The Barons.

[2] Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, 1826, Vol. I, p. 41.

demanded from the King the dismissal of several officers of the household and many of the Queen's retinue.[1]

Henry's sixth Parliament, summoned to meet at Coventry, 6 October, 1404, was presided over by Sir William Esturmy, of Wolf Hall, near Maiden Bradley, Wilts, now the property of the Duke of Somerset. Esturmy's family intermarried with that of St. Maur, and the Dukes of Somerset quarter his coat of arms to this day. The main work of the Coventry Parliament was the attempted spoliation of the Church, and it fell to Esturmy's lot to carry a proposal to the King that the clergy should contribute largely to the expenses of the realm. As a compromise they granted the King a tenth and a half of their revenues.

The next Speaker on the roll, Sir John Tiptoft, whose tenure of the Chair was marked by a perceptible increase in the power of the Commons, and by repressive measures against the Lollards, was the first to enter what Pulteney, in the eighteenth century, called "that hospital for invalids," the House of Peers. "My Lord Bath," said Walpole, on meeting his old opponent in the Upper House, "you and I have now become two of the most insignificant fellows in England!" Summoned as Baron Tiptoft in 1426, his son was created Earl of Worcester in 1449; but the precedent of conferring a peerage upon the Speaker was not renewed for many years. Tiptoft spoke more boldly to the King and to the Peers than any of his predecessors in the Chair of the Commons. He even told the King that, though

[1] Savage was also a considerable landowner in Cheshire, where he owned Frodsham Castle, and his name is perpetuated in one of the minor titles of the Marquesses of Cholmondeley.

his title to the crown was less worthy of respect, his household expenses were in excess of any previous sovereign.

The Speaker's eldest son, another John Tiptoft, has been confused by Hakewil with his father. The Earl of Worcester, who earned the lasting hatred of his countrymen for the ruthless severity with which he repressed the opponents of Edward IV, deserves separate mention at our hands. A willing instrument of the usurper's scheme of revenge, the younger Tiptoft was destined to be far more powerful under the White Rose than ever his father had been under the Red. On the outbreak of the Civil Wars he had betaken himself to the Holy Land, only returning to England after the battle of Towton had secured the crown for his patron. The flower of the English nobility had poured out their blood at Towton to an extent altogether unprecedented; but, when the semblance of peace had been restored to a distracted country, Worcester found congenial work awaiting him.

Proceeding on the Machiavellian principle of extirpating the King's foes as the only effective means of rendering them harmless, he tried and condemned in his Constable's Court within the Palace of Westminster so many of the Lancastrian party as gained him the odious sobriquet of the "Butcher of England."[1] When the headman's axe had been blunted by constant use during his reign of terror, he ordered some of Warwick's followers who fell into his power at Southampton in March, 1470,

[1] In the I Henry IV (1399) the Constable of England had apartments assigned to him in the "Inner Palace" of Westminster (*Rot. Parl.*, III, p. 452).

JOHN TIPTOFT, EARL OF WORCESTER
From a monumental effigy at Ely Cathedral

to be impaled, contrary to any known law of England. But the day of retribution was near. In October of the same year Edward was dispossessed and Henry temporarily restored. Thenceforth there could be little hope or chance of life for the Jeffreys of the fifteenth century. Arraigned in the White Hall of the Palace before the Earl of Oxford, who had been appointed Constable for the purpose, the Speaker's son, who in that same court had sent his Judge's father and brother to the block, was now condemned to die a traitor's death on Tower Hill.

The last Speaker of the reign was the bearer of a famous name. Had Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of English poetry, lived only a few more years than he did, he would have seen his son chosen Speaker of the House of Commons, in which he had himself served as Knight of the Shire for Kent. Thomas Chaucer, Geoffrey's son, was a Westminster man in the fullest sense of the word, for his father lived in Old Palace Yard in a house demolished to make room for Henry VII's Chapel. A man of great wealth,[1] which his father certainly was not, he owned considerable landed property at Ewelme, in Oxfordshire, where he was buried in 1434 in a tomb of great magnificence described by Leland in his Itinerary.

His only daughter and heiress, Alice, married, as her third husband, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, a politician as ambitious as he was incompetent, who, after being virtually Prime Minister of England, was

[1] His wealth was derived in part from the office of Chief Butler to the King, which he held for many years. His predecessor, Tiptoft, enjoyed the same lucrative post.

impeached, and subsequently murdered, in 1450. The fact that the Duchess of Suffolk is described on her tombstone as "Serenissima Principessa" has led to a belief that Thomas Chaucer was an illegitimate son of John of Gaunt, and not Geoffrey's son, but, in the opinion of many competent authorities, the inscription on the Duchess' tomb is a forgery of later date.

Thomas Chaucer was Speaker on no less than five separate occasions,[1] in 1407, 1409–10, 1411, 1414, and in the next reign, in 1421. During his first tenure of the Chair the Commons gained the inalienable right of initiating money grants, though not without a struggle. In the Parliament held at Gloucester[2] they were required to send twelve of their number to report on the questions propounded to them for a huge increase of taxation, and to give in their answer by deputation.

Protesting as they did against this procedure as being an infringement of their privileges, the Declaration of Gloucester, entered on the Rolls, laid down once and for all that money grants, proceeding as they do from the free will of Parliament, must not be hampered by the personal intervention of the Crown in Council, whilst the Commons claimed a precedence in finance in so far as the Lords were required to assent to the money grants of the representatives of the people, instead of the process being reversed. But this was not tantamount to saying that it was beyond the power of the Lords to refuse their assent or to revise the methods by which the money was to be raised.

The King, who was nothing if not a diplomatist, knew

[1] Manning, in his *Lives of the Speakers*, 1851, p. 50, says, in error, that he was only chosen four times. [2] October, 1407.

G. Fisher, delt. *Day & Son, litho.*

THOMAS CHAUCER

1407, 1409-10, 1411, 1414, 1421

From a print of the Memorial Brass in Ewelme Church, Oxfordshire

exactly when to give way, and in 1407 he succeeded in pleasing both parties to the dispute: the Lords by his permission to deliberate, even in his absence, on the state of the realm and the appropriate remedies; the Commons by conceding the principle that no report of a money grant should henceforth be made to the Crown until both Houses were agreed on its terms, such report then to be delivered only by the mouth of their Speaker.[1]

In this connection it should be borne in mind that all Bills granting supplies to the Crown are, after third reading in the Lords, returned to the custody of the Commons (unlike other Bills, which are retained by the Lords pending the Royal Assent), and are taken up by the Speaker when the Commons are summoned to the Lords to hear the Royal Assent given. If, on such an occasion, the King should be present in person, the Speaker addresses the Sovereign on the principal measures awaiting his assent, not forgetting to mention the supplies which have been granted by the Lower branch of the legislature.

Having obtained all the money he wanted, the King did not call Parliament together again until January, 1409–10. By this time Archbishop Arundel, the greatest enemy the Lollards ever had, had retired from the Chancellorship, and the reformers must have secured a majority in the new House, for the first act of the Commons was

[1] The original words of this famous Declaration are worth quoting: "Purveux toutes foitz qe les Seigneurs de lour part, ne les Communes de la leur, ne facent ascun report a ñre dit Sr le Roy d'ascunt grant pr les Communes grantez, & pr les Seigneurs assentuz, ne de les Communications du dit Graunt, aviunt ce qe mesme les Seigneurs & Communes soient d'un assent & d'un accord en celle partie & adouges en manore & forme comº il est accustomez, c'est assever pr bouche de Purparlour de la dite Commune par le temps estant."

to reverse their former attitude of hostility towards the Anti-Clerical movement. They now recommended to the King the wholesale confiscation of Church lands, but this revolutionary proposal was not destined to receive the Royal Assent. Though the Houses continued in session until May, no great constitutional change marked their labours.[1]

Shortly before his death, the last subsidy voted to him having nearly expired, Henry called another Parliament; but in consequence of his serious illness no formal opening took place, and therefore no choice of a Speaker. On 20 March, 1413, the King died in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, whither he had been carried by the monks after he had fallen down in a swoon before the shrine of the Confessor.

The short reign of Henry V, the greatest soldier of his age, was also the shortest since the Norman Conquest. Yet in nine years of, for the most part, glorious strife, Parliamentary institutions saw considerable development. This period has usually been associated with military achievement rather than with Constitutional progress. Yet, in 1414, when a Hungerford was again called to the Chair[2] and the Lower House met in the "Fermerie" at Leicester, the King granted to his Commons a boon which they had long desired. This was to the effect that their petitions, which now, for the first time, were be-

[1] Or those of the succeeding Parliament of 1411, in which Chaucer was Speaker for the third time.

[2] Sir Walter (son of the Speaker of 1377), created Lord Hungerford in 1425–26 and buried in Salisbury Cathedral in 1449, where his mutilated brass is still to be seen with its stone slab powdered with sickles, the favourite device of this family before crests came into general use.

Schnebbelie, delt. *J. Basire, Sculpt.*

SIR WALTER HUNGERFORD, AFTERWARDS LORD HUNGERFORD

1414

Formerly in the North side of the nave of Salisbury Cathedral
Reproduced from Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments"

ginning to be replaced by bills,[1] should in future be engrossed as statutes, without garbling or alteration of any kind by way of addition or diminution, after passing from their control. And whilst the King maintained unimpaired the prerogative of refusing the Commons petitions outright, he could henceforward only accept them in the shape in which they were presented by the Speaker for the royal approval.[2]

Sir Walter Hungerford, apart from his Parliamentary career, fought bravely against the French, and, as if something of the military ardour of the King had animated his faithful Commons, the bold spectacle is next presented of a Speaker[3] buckling on his sword and armour, accompanying his Sovereign to the war, and fighting by his side at Agincourt. In domestic politics Henry's chief aim was to reassert the authority of the Church, and in his determination to crush the Lollards he was assisted once more by Archbishop Arundel, to whom repression of the reformers was a congenial task. Oldcastle, the most conspicuous of the anti-clerical party, was excommunicated, and after evading capture for four years, was dragged before Parliament as an outlaw, and summarily drawn, hanged, and burned at the New Gallows beyond the Temple Gate. Roger Flower of Oakham, Knight of the Shire for Rutland, was Speaker when the Commons petitioned for his execution.

[1] Langland, indeed, in "Piers Plowman," written in 1362, makes use of the word "bill," though scarcely in the strict Parliamentary sense.

[2] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 22, where the Commons are described in an interesting passage as "Assentirs as well as Peticioners," as being desirous of "Axkynge remedie of any mischief by the mouthe of their Speaker," and as having ever been a "membre of your Parlement."

[3] Once again Thomas Chaucer.

Sir Walter Beauchamp, who sat for Wiltshire, had been Flower's predecessor. Little is known of him beyond the fact of his being the first lawyer to be chosen by the Commons themselves for this high office. But having once chosen a lawyer for their President, the Commons soon renewed their preference for the long robe. In Henry V's ninth Parliament,[1] Roger Hunt of Chalverston, Beds, Knight of the Shire for the County, an eminent lawyer, and in 1438 Baron of the Exchequer, was called to the Chair. To him succeeded Thomas Chaucer, for the fifth time, in 1421.

One further Parliament was called by Henry V before his early death. It was summoned solely to provide the money necessary for the prosecution of the war with France, and, in the King's absence, the Duke of Gloucester, as regent, issued the summons for it to meet at Westminster.[2] The length of the session has not been definitely ascertained, but it is known that the new Speaker was Richard Baynard, a member of an old East Anglian family who had intermarried with the Dorewoods.[3]

The last of the Lancastrian kings was also the weakest. Henry VI, an amiable imbecile with a saving sense of piety, as testified by the foundation of his "holy shade" at Eton, was completely overshadowed by the superior force of character of his wife.[4] When he came to be of legal age in 1442,[5]

[1] December, 1420.

[2] December, 1421.

[3] Baynard represented Essex from 1405–6 until 1433. For a pedigree of his family see Morant's *Essex*, Vol. II, pp. 176, 404.

[4] Margaret of Anjou.

[5] During his minority the Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester carried on the government.

Her hem ꝛ dolven vnder this ſtone ꝛ Roger hunt ꝛ Johane his Wife ꝛ
Of Whoſe proper coſtes a lone ꝛ This Chirche Was paved loon dñ ꝙ bille
Almighty Jhu ſaveng in trone ꝛ Dñ bothe theer ſoules to haue mcy ꝛ
As thou canſte how yfaile a lone ꝛ Wt yi precious blood meñs ſoule to by

ROGER HUNT
1420
From a memorial brass in Great Linford Church, Bucks

it was evident to thoughtful men that all the advantages gained by his illustrious father were in danger of being lost. During the early years of the King's minority, the Chair of the Commons was filled by Sir John Russell, a member of a family which has played a prominent part in the political history of this country, especially since the acquisition of the Woburn property at the dissolution of the monasteries. The Russells had no connection with the county of Bedford in the fifteenth century, and the Speaker of 1423 and 1432 sat for Herefordshire. Attempts have been made to derive the descent of the first Earl of Bedford [1] from the Speaker of Henry VI, but it seems probable that the pedigrees contained in the earlier editions of Sir Bernard Burke's *Peerage* are fabulous. The rise of the younger branch of the Russell family was really due to the successful commercial operations of a fishmonger at Poole, in the county of Dorset. One of the junior branch of this ancient race became Knight of the Shire in 1472, but the fortunes of the family were accidentally consolidated when Joanna of Castille landed at Weymouth in 1506, and was entertained at Wolfeton, near Dorchester, by Sir Thomas Trenchard, until the Earl of Arundel, who had been sent by Henry VII to escort her to Windsor, arrived. Sir Thomas summoned his kinsman, Mr. Russell, to help him to entertain his royal visitor, because he was the only gentleman of his acquaintance in the county who could speak Spanish. This Mr. Russell, having been introduced to Henry VII, who quickly discerned his merits and promise of future usefulness, became the first Earl of Bedford, and was the direct ancestor of the present Duke.

[1] So created in 1550.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that Sir John Russell was again chosen Speaker in 1450, but this is not accurate, as Sir William Oldhall was then called to the Chair. During Sir John's second term of office in 1432, an important concession was obtained by the Commons. The King, we read, "released the subsidy granted in the last Parliament on lands and tenements, so as it should never be mentioned again." The imposition of a land tax on the subject was then not only regarded by all parties as a thing too monstrous and unjust ever to be reimposed, but the work of one Parliament was deliberately reversed by its successor.

The Parliament which met in 1425 was presided over by Sir Thomas Walton, who had sat in the House of Commons for nearly thirty years, sometimes for Huntingdonshire and sometimes for Bedfordshire.[1] The greater part of the session was taken up with what seems at first sight to have been an irregular matter to occupy the attention of the Lower House—the settlement of a quarrel between John Mowbray, Earl Marshal of England, and Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, on a question of their relative precedence in the House of Lords.[2] Roger Hunt, whom we have already noticed as Speaker, now appeared as counsel for Mowbray, and that forensic warrior, Sir Walter Beauchamp, another former Speaker, represented his kinsman. The fact of their being so engaged as counsel may have been the reason for the contest being fought in the Commons. Walton was himself a lawyer, but the legal questions involved were rendered nugatory by the forfeited Dukedom of Norfolk

[1] Sir Thomas Walton, or Wauton as the name is sometimes spelt, was connected by marriage with the Tiptoft family, which may in part account for his advancement to the Chair.

[2] See *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, pp. 267–8.

Albert Way, delt.

EFFIGY OF SIR RICHARD VERNON

1425-6

In the Church of Tong, Shropshire

being restored to the Earl Marshal, whereupon Warwick's pretensions fell to the ground.

Passing over one or two Speakers, whose names and periods of office will be found in the catalogue at the end of this volume, the Parliament of 1429–30, presided over by William Alington, Knight of the Shire for Cambridge, witnessed a great change in the county electorate by which the right to vote at the election of Knights of the Shire formerly possessed by the miscellaneous body that constituted the county-court (there is nothing in the writs of the thirteenth century to suggest that the franchise was limited to "free" men to the exclusion of villeins), was limited to the possessors of a freehold of forty shillings annual value,[1] a qualification which continued to be the basis of the English county franchise for the next four centuries.

Shortly before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses the Chair was filled by William Tresham, who sat for his native county of Northants during a long series of years. He was Speaker on four separate occasions—in 1439, 1441–42, 1446–47, and 1449.[2] Tresham, as a prominent Yorkist, took an active part in the impeachment of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. The House was in session when, on the 17th of March, 1449, Suffolk was hauled before the King and sentenced to five years' exile. Accused of having betrayed England to the French, he was done to death in 1450; and the Speaker, who by this time had become an object of suspicion to the Lancastrian party, was also murdered, at

[1] VIII Henry VI, c. 7.

[2] The *Dictionary of National Biography* says that Tresham was again Speaker in 1448–49, but this was not the case, as the Chair was filled by Sir John Say in that Parliament.

Thorpland, in his native county, whither he had gone to meet the Duke of York.[1] The son of William Tresham, Sir Thomas Tresham, who was brought up in Henry VI's household, was also Speaker in the packed Lancastrian Parliament of 1459. Like his father, he met with a violent death. He fought on the side of the Lancastrians at St. Albans, was proclaimed a traitor after Edward IV's return, and was beheaded at Tewkesbury, having been, in all, three times attainted.

Sir John Say, Knight of the Shire for Herts, also filled the Chair in turbulent times. During Jack Cade's insurrection[2] the rioters threatened his life, and he was indicted for treason at the Guildhall. Jack Cade, the first Radical in the history of English politics,[3] declared that the freedom of election for Knights of the Shire had been wrested from the people by the great men of the land, who directed their tenants to choose men of whom they tacitly disapproved. Cade had probably seen and read Langland's "Richard the Redeless," a poem written as a remonstrance to Richard II, for there is a passage in it positively affirming that the Knights of the Shire were the nominees of the Court. Though Sir John Say began political life as a Lancastrian, he threw in his lot later with the Yorkists.

[1] Lord Grey de Ruthyn, a member of Queen Margaret's faction, is said to have been responsible for his death (see *Paston Letters*, 5 May, 1450, No. 93, Vol. I, p. 124). Leland, in his Itinerary, gives a circumstantial account of the murder.

[2] 1450.

[3] This proud title should, perhaps, be conferred on John Ball, who was hanged in 1381. Adopting as his text—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

he incited the villeins to murder all the lords and all the lawyers in the land.

L. A. B. Waller, delt. *J. G. Waller, sculpt.*

SIR JOHN SAY

1448-9, 1467

From a Brass in Broxbourne Church, Herts.
Reproduced from Waller's "Monumental Brasses," 1864

Dying in 1478, he was buried in Broxbourne Church, Herts, where his memorial brass, one of the few remaining in England showing traces of colour, is still to be seen. The William Say who was Speaker *pro tem.* during Lenthall's absence from the Chair in 1659 was probably a collateral descendant.

The later Parliaments of Henry's ill-starred reign,[1] presided over respectively by Sir William Oldhall, Thomas Thorpe and his successor Sir Thomas Charlton, Sir John Wenlock, Sir Thomas Tresham, and John Green, were so overshadowed, first by Jack Cade's rebellion, and then by the Wars of the Roses, that little or no legislation was attempted, and the course of constitutional progress was arrested. As the fortunes of the faction fight between the Red Rose and the White inclined to either party, the time of the House was mainly occupied in the prosecution and attainder of the more prominent political leaders who chanced, for the moment, to be on the losing side.

It would be outside the scope of the present work to enter at any length into the causes which led to the outbreak of hostilities, but it should be borne in mind that the evils of livery and maintenance were once more rife, and when, after forty years of strife, the French wars ceased to afford occupation to the English soldiery, bands of military retainers habituated to the practice of arms were at the absolute disposal of the great landowning class, only awaiting the signal of their leaders to re-engage in acts of violence. Whilst the greater nobility for the most part ranged themselves on the Lancastrian side, a constitutional opposition, with the Duke of York at its head, com-

[1] 1450, 1453, 1455, 1459, and 1460.

manded the sympathies of the City of London and the bulk of the provincial municipalities.

Sir William Oldhall, a Hertfordshire magnate, had for his country home a castellated mansion, in part incorporated in Hunsdon House, the property in after years of the Calvert family ; and he was chosen Knight of the Shire for Herts on his first entry into Parliament in 1450. He had been Chamberlain to the Duke of York, and it was therefore only to be expected that he would take a strong line against the feeble occupant of the throne. Even more remarkable than Speaker Tiptoft's celebrated demand of the Sovereign was that which Oldhall now made on behalf of the Commons. He claimed the immediate dismissal of no less than twenty-eight officers of the Court, including a duke and duchess, a bishop, three barons, four knights, and one abbot. All were banished for a year, " to see," as the King said, " if in the meantime any man could truly lay anything to their charge." Being himself implicated in some way in Cade's rebellion, though the evidence against him was not very conclusive, the Speaker was attainted by the next Parliament. He took sanctuary in St. Martin's-le-Grand, for Westminster would have been too dangerous an asylum for a man of his position, and he only emerged from hiding after the first battle of St. Albans had again placed his party in power. Fortune inclining once more, after Ludlow, to the Red Rose, his name was again included in a Bill of Attainder, and though, on the accession of Edward IV, his sentence was promptly reversed, Oldhall's public career was at an end, nor did he seek to re-enter Parliament.

Dame Agnes Paston was anxious to bring about a

match between the ex-Speaker and her husband's sister Elizabeth, "if ye can think that his land standeth clear." This was in 1455, but nothing came of the project. A few years later the young lady wedded Robert Poynings, who was sword-bearer to Jack Cade. He was killed in the second battle of St. Albans, and his widow remarried Sir George Browne, of Betchworth, Surrey.

The adherents of the Red Rose once more predominated in the Parliament of 1453, and the choice of the Commons for their Speaker fell upon Thomas Thorpe, the representative of the county of Essex, who had been brought up from his childhood in the royal service. But in August Henry VI became insane, and during his incapacity the Yorkists singled out the Speaker for attack. He became a marked man when it transpired that he had taken possession of some arms belonging to the Duke of York, and, notwithstanding the flagrant breach of privilege which his arrest involved, Thorpe was committed to the Fleet prison and fined £1000 before he was released.[1]

Dismissed from his offices of Remembrancer and Baron of the Exchequer by the "Butcher of England," Thorpe recovered his position at the next revolution of fortune's wheel, so that he was enabled to draw up Yorkist attainders in the Parliament which met at Coventry in November, 1459. But when the Yorkists came to town in 1460 he took refuge in the Tower. He was soon taken prisoner again, and, after attempting to escape in the disguise of a monk, he was recognised and beheaded by the mob at Haringay on 17 February, 1460–61.

[1] Sir Thomas Charlton was chosen Speaker in his stead on the 16th of February, 1453–54.

Nor was Sir John Wenlock, the Speaker of the 1455 Parliament, more fortunate in his end. A Knight of the Shire for Beds and a dependent of Warwick the "King Maker," he was at first a Lancastrian, only to change sides in 1455. After being wounded at the first battle of St. Albans, he was killed at Tewkesbury, fighting once again on the Lancastrian side. The manner of his death was sufficiently shocking even in this age of violence, for he was struck down and his skull cleft in two with a battle-axe by the Duke of Somerset for not coming up in time, whereby the fortunes of the day were alleged to have been lost. His murderer was beheaded on the same day.

Wenlock's life had been one of activity in the field throughout the whole period of the Civil Wars, nor does history record a more martial career than his in the annals of the Chair. After taking part, as has been seen, in the battle of St. Albans, he captured Sandwich in 1460, and entered London with Edward IV, after fighting for him at Towton. He held Calais for the usurper, but rejoined his first love at Tewkesbury, the last engagement of his chequered military career.

A Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, he was raised to the Peerage as Baron Wenlock after the coronation of Edward IV. He owned property at Sommaries, at Luton, and at Houghton Conquest, all in the county of Bedford; and he built the Wenlock mortuary chapel in Luton Church, though his bones were not destined to lie in it. His second wife, Agnes Danvers, remarried Sir John Say, the Speaker of 1449, 1463, and 1467, and a neighbour of Wenlock in the adjoining county of Herts.

The last of the Speakers of Henry VI was to witness even more stirring scenes at Westminster than any of his immediate predecessors. John Green, whose homely name is not to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was voted to the Chair in 1460, and though this Parliament only sat for about ten days, it found time to repeal all the Acts passed at Coventry in the previous year and to annul the attainders of the Yorkist Lords.

After the battle of Wakefield the Wars of the Roses, which began by an attempt to vindicate constitutional liberty, degenerated into a savage blood feud between two desperate and reckless factions, in which no quarter was either given or expected. John Green, though not himself known to fame, was probably an eye-witness, in the momentous month of October, 1460, of a startling scene enacted in the Palace of Westminster, when Richard, Duke of York, the victor at St. Albans, burst into the great hall at the head of five hundred armed men, as if about to seize the vacant throne, declaring that he "challenged and claimed the crown of England," as heir of Richard II. He proposed to an astonished audience, much after the manner of Henry IV in 1399, that his coronation should take place in the Abbey on All-hallows Day following.[1] But, though the final triumph of the White Rose was near at hand and the old hall of Rufus and of Richard was once more to witness the death knell of a dynasty, a compromise was arrived

[1] Parliament had met on 7 October, and the Duke of York's invasion of the Palace was three days later. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bourchier, asked the intruder if he desired to see the King, to which York made answer that he knew of no one in the kingdom who ought not rather to wait on him.

at, whereby Henry was to retain the crown for life and Duke Richard was to be recognised as his heir. [1]

Soon news reached London that the valiant Queen Margaret had succeeded in collecting a fresh army in the north, and Richard, hastening from the Council Chamber to the camp, marched to meet her at Wakefield, only to lose his life and to defer the imminent success of his cause, in a battle unprecedented for the savagery with which it was contested. Margaret caused York's head to be cut off after death, and, adorned in cruel mockery with a paper crown, it was stuck on one of the gates of the city from which his title was derived.[2]

After Wakefield, the leadership of the Yorkists fell into the hands of the "King Maker," the greatest aristocrat in England since John of Gaunt. But not until he too had fallen at Barnet, and the triumph of the White Rose was assured at Tewkesbury, was young Edward [3] able to plant himself firmly on the throne, to restore something like peace to an exhausted and distracted England, and o open a new constitutional era for its people.

[1] During the negotiations the King retreated to his wife's apartments, and York remained in the Palace till he had gained his point. He then withdrew to Baynard's Castle, his own mansion in the city.

[2] See Shakespeare, third part of *King Henry VI :*

"So York may overlook the town of York"

(Act II, scene 4, line 180).

[3] Like Henry IV, fresh from his landing at Ravenspur.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS UNDER THE HOUSE OF YORK, A PERIOD, FOR THE MOST PART, OF SUBSERVIENCY TO THE CROWN

(1461–1485)

FOUR SPEAKERS

James Strangeways	John Wood
William Alington	William Catesby

ON the cessation of the Wars of the Roses the exhaustion of the English nobility coincided with an increased desire amongst the upper middle class to obtain a seat in the House of Commons. A number of new boroughs sprang into existence, and men of good birth were selected to represent them at Westminster.

It is true that early in the history of the Mother of Parliaments some of the more powerful territorial families had monopolised the borough representation in the neighbourhood of the castles and mansions in which dwelt the Knights of the Shire. Thus in East Anglia the Fastolfs and the Pastons had swooped down upon the smaller boroughs as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, when a member of the first-named family sat for Great Yarmouth,[1] and one of the latter for Grimsby.[2]

[1] In 1300–1. [2] In 1325.

In the north country a Lowther sat for Appleby in 1318, and a Pickering for Carlisle in 1334; but these were exceptions to the general rule, whereby the burgesses, for the most part, were men of mean estate and humble calling. In 1382–83 the City of London elected Sir Nicholas Brembre, an ex-Lord Mayor, the head of the grocers, and a staunch supporter of the King. The victualling trades, the grocers and fishmongers, as a rule supported the Court; whereas the clothing trades, the drapers and the mercers, mostly ranged themselves in opposition. Brembre came to an untimely end, being murdered in 1388.

Between the date of his election and the year 1467 exactly fifty burgesses are described in the official returns as being either "miles," "armiger," or "gentleman," and the appearance of one or other of these magic words after their names probably indicates the gradual relinquishment of an obligation on the part of the constituencies to pay wages to their representatives. While the pay of the burgesses was only two shillings a day, the Knights of the Shire were remunerated at double rates. The change in the status of the borough member, though gradual, was progressive, for whereas in the first Parliament of Henry VI not one burgess is described as "armiger," and only one in his last,[1] no less than six Sussex borough representatives are described in 1472 as "armiger." One hundred years later, as the old class distinctions were swept away, the esquires predominated over the tradesmen and merchants.

In 1472 Sir John Paston was anxious to be chosen a Knight of the Shire for Norfolk, which he had already

[1] 1460.

represented in 1467; but the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk having come to an agreement, Sir Robert Wingfield and Sir Richard Howard were returned. Paston's brother advised Sir John to try for the borough of Maldon, if he could arrange matters with the Sheriff, but in the end he was returned for Great Yarmouth in 1477–78. When in London he lodged at the "George," by Paul's Wharf, and, no doubt, proceeded to Westminster by water in the performance of his Parliamentary duties.[1]

The first Parliament of Edward IV chose for its Speaker a Yorkshire knight, Sir James Strangeways, of Whorlton.[2] A new precedent was introduced on his presentation. Not only did he make the customary "excuse" and a demand for the continuance of the privileges of the House, but he offered a formal address to the Crown, reviewing the political situation and the events of the recent Civil War.

"Presentatio Prelocutoris

"Item, die Veneris tunc prox sequent, videlicet Tertio die Parliamenti, prefati Cões coram Domino Rege in Parliamento prædicto comparentes, presentaverunt Domino Regi quendam Jacobum Strangways militem, pro cõi Prelocutore suo, de quo idem Dominus Rex se bene contentavit. Qui quiden Jacobus, post excusationem suam coram Domino Rege factam, pro eo qd ipsa sua excusatio ex parto Dicti Domini Regis admitti non potuit, eidem Domino Rege humillime supplicavit, quatinus omnia & singula per ipsum in Parliamento prædicto, nomine dicte Communitatis proferend' & declarand', sub tali posset Protestatione proferre & declarare, qd si ipse aliqua sibi per prefatos Socios suos injuncta, aliter quam ipsi concordati fuerint, aut in addendo vel omittendo

[1] See *Paston Letters*, 21 September, 1472. [2] 5 November, 1461.

declaraverit, ea sic declarata per predictos Socios suos corrigere posset & emendare; et qd Protestatio sua hujusmodi in Rotulo Parliamenti prædicti inactitaretur. Cui per prefatum Dominum cancellarium de mandato Domini Regis extitit responsum, qd idem Jacobus tali Protestatione frueretur & gauderet, quali alii Prelocutores hujusmodi antea hac tempora uti & gaudere consueverunt."[1]

The precedent set by Speaker Strangeways in 1461 is the origin of the existing custom which enables young members of the House, exchanging for this occasion only the dull conventionality of morning dress for uniformed splendour, to move and second the Address to the Throne. Strangeways received a grant from Henry VII in 1485, from which it appears that he lost no time in espousing the Tudor cause. He left a family of no less than seventeen children, and at his death, in 1516, he was buried in St. Mary Overy's, in Southwark, the cathedral of South London, in a tomb not now to be identified.

At the close of the session the young King thanked the Commons for their support, and in so doing assured them of his determination to protect them to the utmost of his power.[2] The greater part of the session, following closely the precedent of 1459, had been devoted to attainting the followers of Henry VI, alive or dead, and providing for the confiscation of their lands and possessions; the Act of Attainder not being drawn up by the House of Commons, but presented to it ready-made. It was a far more sweeping proscription than the Coventry

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 462.

[2] Dr. S. R. Gardiner regarded this fresh departure as the beginning of a new constitutional era in which the wishes of the middle classes, both in town and country, were to prevail over those of the nobility, simultaneously with the strengthening of the kingship.

one, for it implicated no less than 133 persons, of whom 14 were peers of the realm, 7 dead and 7 living, and 100 knights, squires, and men of lesser degree.

The young King, being at this time completely under the influence of his cousin, reigned only in name while Warwick ruled. The humiliation of Henry VI was complete, and of all his former strongholds he only retained one castle, that at Harlech. When Henry again became temporarily dominant in 1470, a Parliament, the fifth of Edward's reign, was summoned to meet at Westminster in the month of November; but if any records of it were kept, it is believed that they were destroyed by Edward's orders after Henry's deposition and subsequent murder. William Alington, son of the Speaker of the 1429 Parliament, and, like his father, Knight of the Shire for Cambridge, became Speaker in October, 1472, and held the office until March, 1474–75, the longest Parliament which England had hitherto known.

In the intervals between the summoning of his various Parliaments the King lived on confiscations and gifts extorted from opponents whose lives he had spared, and it has been estimated that nearly one-fifth of the kingdom came into his hands by forfeiture. The vast estates of Warwick, the King Maker, and of the Archbishop of York, to give but two instances out of many, should have furnished ample wealth for a ruler less extravagant and pleasure-loving than Edward proved himself to be. But Jane Shore[1] and others of her pro-

[1] According to Sir Thomas More, Jane Shore was a woman of a kindly disposition, possessed of a never failing wit and good humour, and as her influence was uniformly exerted in the direction of clemency and gentleness, she was generally regarded with kindly feelings by the King's subjects.

fession exerted the same evil influence over him as had Alice Perrers over Edward III, and Fair Rosamund over Henry II in an even earlier age, and it soon became necessary to devise fresh methods of taxation.

The Commons were invited to consider favourably a project for an inquisitorial assessment of private incomes. This, not unnaturally, proved to be highly unpopular, and a growing spirit of independence in the Lower House is revealed in its refusal to grant money for the invasion of France unless it received assurances that the army would start at a given date.[1] Parliament was summoned to meet again in January, 1477-78, and the session is believed to have lasted about five weeks, during which time the sole business under consideration was the trial of the Duke of Clarence. No grants were asked for, no legislation was attempted, and in the course of the month of February it was announced that Clarence was dead, having perished in the Tower no man knew how. After this date no Parliament was called until 1483, the King having obtained an assured income for life from earlier Parliamentary grants, supplemented by the "benevolences" which became so odious to the nation at large.

The eighth and last Parliament of the reign was called together in January, 1482-83, and the cause of summons stated that it was convened to hear Edward's complaints against the French King. The new Speaker was John

[1] "The new method of raising funds by income tax necessitated an assessment of lands at their real value. It had been found, by experience, that to allow owners to return their own valuations, resulted in a sum considerably below what was right. The King's financial agents accordingly began an assessment. The King took great interest in the process, and wrote that the progress of collection was 'one of the things earthly that we most desire to know.'"—*Edward the Fourth*, by Laurence Stratford, 1910, p. 217.

Wood, Knight of the Shire for Sussex, and one of the least distinguished in the long catalogue. It was in the main a humdrum session. The King graciously consented to accept the comparatively modest sum of £11,000 for the annual expenses of his household, and, in return for their liberality, the Commons were permitted to pass Acts dealing with the trade of the country, with the grievances of "livery and maintenance" which had long vexed the minds of the people, and to spend their energies on unambitious measures designed for the preservation of domestic peace. But of real redress of grievances there was none, owing, perhaps, to the fact that throughout his reign Edward acted as the head of a triumphant political party, rather than as the ruler of a contented and united nation.

On 9 April, 1483, he died in the Palace of Westminster, prematurely worn out by a life of debauchery. For a week his remains lay in St. Stephen's Chapel before being removed to Windsor for interment. Naked to the waist, in order that the civic authorities might be assured of his death, the lying-in-state of Edward IV at Westminster presents a striking contrast to the dignified ceremonial observed on the occasion of the recent death of King Edward VII, when, for the first time in its long history, the great hall was utilised for a similar purpose. In May, 1910, the two branches of the Legislature, headed by the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker in their robes of state, forgot their differences in the presence of a common sorrow, and united in honouring their departed Sovereign lying in the hall of Rufus re-edified and embellished by the last of the Plantagenet race. Edward IV was the first of the Kings of England to be buried,

of his own free will, in the Royal Chapel of St. George, though to it the body of his unhappy predecessor and rival is said to have been removed by Richard III from its first resting-place, Chertsey.

The severance of the House of York from the traditional burial place of the Kings of England marks the dawn of a sentiment which led eventually to the substitution of Windsor for Westminster as the last resting-place of the Sovereign, until the Coronation remains the only indissoluble link between the Abbey and the throne.

The Kings of England, unlike their brothers of France, seem never to have feared to be reminded of death. In Anglo-Saxon times they were buried at Winchester where they lived, and where they were crowned. When they became truly English they were crowned, as they lived, at Westminster. And when they died, they were buried, almost as a matter of course, in the Abbey, and as close as possible to the shrine of the Confessor. "Their graves, like their thrones, were in the midst of their own life, and of the life of their people." [1]

In the sixteenth century the Palace of Westminster ceased to be the accustomed home of the Sovereign, from causes to be alluded to hereafter, and though the first of the Tudors was interred in the magnificent chapel originally intended as a mausoleum for the last of the Lancastrian kings, Henry VIII, turning in aversion from a spot connected in his mind with the hated marriage of his youth, directed that his bones should be laid at Windsor beside his best-loved wife Jane Seymour.

A reaction in favour of Westminster set in with the accession of Mary, and it was by her direction that the

[1] Stanley's *Memorials of Westminster.*

body of Edward VI, the last male child of the Tudor line, was interred in the Abbey. Elizabeth was the last of the royal race to whom a monument was erected there, and since her death, neither the gratitude of a successor nor the affection of a nation has gone so far as to provide either sumptuous tomb or recumbent effigy for James I, Charles II, William and Mary, Anne, or the second monarch of the House of Hanover. They all lie in the Abbey without any such memorial. While it is significant that the custom of royal interment at Westminster should scarcely have survived the Reformation, from the sixteenth century onwards the figures of other than kings meet the eye in ever-increasing numbers. Warriors, statesmen, and leaders of Parliament were freely accorded the honour of burial in the Abbey, and before Elizabeth's death the bones of a Speaker were laid to rest there, for the first time since the reign of Edward III.

Edward V was a true son of Westminster, for he was born in the Sanctuary and educated in the Abbot's school. On the flight of Edward IV from London the Queen took refuge in Westminster and accepted the hospitality of Thomas Millyng, who was Abbot from 1469 till 1474. He was one of the most capable rulers the monastery ever had, and a great benefactor to the fabric. In gratitude for his timely help, and for his having stood godfather to the infant prince, the Queen founded, after Tewkesbury, the chantry and chapel of St. Erasmus in the Abbey. It was, however, destroyed by Henry VII during the building of his own noble mausoleum. Edward and his younger brother were murdered in the Tower by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, only about

six weeks after the death of Edward IV. After being proclaimed Protector by the Council, Gloucester removed from Crosby Hall, or Crosby Place, as it was then called, to Westminster, and ascended the throne as Richard III on 25 June. His first and only Parliament met at Westminster in the Painted Chamber on 23 January, 1483–84. It chose for its Speaker William Catesby, a lawyer, and the devoted adherent of Richard from the moment when he urged his master to assume the crown till he died for a lost cause only two years later.[1] "The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell the Dog," to quote a popular distich, which cost its author his life, governed all England "under the hog" for a little over a year.

There seems to be little or no evidence that Catesby was personally unpopular with the House of Commons, and it is, no doubt, largely due to the odium cast upon both him and Richard by Shakespeare that his name has acquired such a sinister reputation in after ages. In the Parliament over which he presided, short though it was, time was found to pass an Act for the abolition of those "benevolences" which had made Edward IV so unpopular at the close of his reign. The statutes of the realm were now, for the first time, printed in English that all men might read them, and no measures of repression or severity towards opponents were introduced to the House. Richard kept Christmas at Westminster in 1484 with great state, but it was destined to be his and Catesby's last. Both met their doom in the fateful thirteenth encounter between the Houses of Lancaster

[1] One of the Catesby family was Keeper of the Royal Palace at Westminster and also of the Fleet Prison, and Robert Catesby, the projector of the Gunpowder Plot, was a descendant of the Speaker.

WILLIAM CATESBY
1483-4
From a Memorial Brass at Ashby St. Ledgers, Northants

and York, the battle of Bosworth being the closing scene in a struggle which had cost 100,000 lives. At the time of his death Richard had not completed his thirty-fifth year, nor was Catesby much older. The ex-Speaker was beheaded without form or semblance of a trial, three days after the fighting was over, time, however, being given him to make his will.

The dynasty of York had only endured for twenty-four years, yet this short space was not without importance for the House of Commons. With the close of mediæval monarchy, and the advent of a more personal element in the relations of the throne towards Parliament, disappeared, at all events for a time, much of the sturdy independence which had animated the earlier occupants of the Chair. Patriots like De la Mare, who used their position in the House to call attention to the pressing necessity of maritime defence;[1] independent leaders like Savage and Tiptoft, who did not shrink on occasion from admonishing the Sovereign on his shortcomings, compare very favourably with the servile tribe of lawyers who monopolised the Chair in the Tudor period.

The Dudleys and Empsons of Henry VII, the Riches and Audleys of his successor on the throne, and the Snagges and Puckerings of Elizabethan memory, would have been impossible under the Plantagenets, and it is a curious fact that the Speakers of the Irish House of Commons, down to nearly the close of the eighteenth century, were regarded as Parliamentary leaders far more than were their English prototypes at the same period. Edmond Sexten Pery, Speaker of the Irish Commons from 1772–85, used his great political power in the best

[1] *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 307.

interests of his country to an extent unapproached by any of his predecessors in office.

Though there are great names to be found in the Tudor catalogue of Speakers, as will be shown hereafter, the fame of the two greatest amongst them was won in spheres other than Parliamentary. The tenure of the Chair by Sir Thomas More and Sir Edward Coke was in each case a mere passing incident in the life of a man who played a leading part in the history of his country. With the decay of chivalry and the growth of a more commercial spirit in England went hand in hand a lessening of the importance of the Commons. Yet the spirit of liberty was never wholly dead. It only awaited the coming of the seventeenth century, and the final struggle of the Commons with the Crown to reassert itself with added force.

CHAPTER V

WESTMINSTER AND PARLIAMENT IN TUDOR TIMES. RESTRICTION OF THE POWERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND INCREASED POWER OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL

THIRTY-THREE SPEAKERS

Henry VII—
- Thomas Lovell
- John Mordaunt
- Thomas Fitzwilliam
- Richard Empson
- Robert Drury
- Reginald Bray (doubtful)
- Thomas Englefield
- Edmond Dudley

Henry VIII—
- Robert Sheffield
- Thomas Nevill
- Thomas More
- Thomas Audley
- Humphrey Wingfield
- Richard Rich
- Nicholas Hare
- Thomas Moyle
- John Baker

Edward VI—
- James Dyer

Mary—
- John Pollard
- Robert Brooke
- Clement Heigham
- William Cordell

Elizabeth—
- Thomas Gargrave
- Thomas Williams
- Richard Onslow
- Christopher Wray
- Robert Bell
- John Popham
- John Puckering
- Thomas Snagge
- Edward Coke
- Christopher Yelverton
- John Croke

AT the accession of Henry VII the House of Commons acquired an immediate, if temporary, importance as the working Chamber, from the depletion of the numbers of the House of Lords. Forfeiture, confiscation and attainder

had so decimated the Upper House that only twenty-nine temporal peers were entitled to sit in it. The old feudal nobility had been weakened and reduced in the Wars of the Roses, though without any violent dislocation of the Constitution; and until the peerages created in the sixteenth century laid the foundations of an aristocracy which could never again be a serious menace to the Crown, the House of Lords, as a legislative body, virtually ceased to exist.

In the first Parliament of Henry VII sat the head of the great family of Nevill—the Earl of Westmorland. Allied in blood to the King Maker, and owning vast estates in the north, south, and midland districts, the first earl of this creation, a Lancastrian to the backbone, left four sons, all of whom were raised to the Peerage, whilst his five sons-in-law were the Dukes of Buckingham, Norfolk, and York, the Earl of Northumberland, the head of the ancient house of Percy, and Lord Dacre.

Whilst the Nevills had been for centuries an acknowledged force in English political life, the Upper House, in spite of the grievous losses it had sustained, still numbered amongst its surviving members the Berkeleys, the Courtenays, the Stanleys, the Greys, and the Veres, to mention but a few of the more notable names of the English aristocracy. The Herberts and the Howards were but newly ennobled. The hour of the Seymours, the Cavendishes, and the Cecils had not struck.

That it was Henry VII's deliberate intention to relegate the Lords to a position of legislative impotence is shown by the fact that in the whole course of his reign he created scarcely any new peers, though some few were restored

to their former rank on the reversal of their attainders.[1] In addition to crippling the hereditary branch of the legislature, the Tudors desired to be as far as possible independent of the House of Commons. Tonnage and poundage had been granted to the Crown for life since the reign of Henry VI, and although Henry VII summoned seven Parliaments in all, their attention, with the exception of some salutary changes in the law relating to trade and navigation, whereby a powerful stimulus was given to English shipping, both national and mercantile, was in the main devoted to the raising of subsidies. The ruling passion of Henry's life was the accumulation of wealth, not so much from an innate love of money for money's sake, as from a desire to secure a large reserve to be used as a guarantee for the national peace.

Henry enlarged the powers of the Privy Council in the new Court of Star Chamber, an assembly whose proceedings were never regulated by statute. At first a court of summary jurisdiction, it was destined to become in after years the favourite instrument of the Sovereign in the illegal collection of compulsory loans. The actual room in the Palace of Westminster in which this much-dreaded tribunal held its sittings remained standing until the great fire of 1834, soon after which it was taken down. Its exact site is indicated at the present day by a brass plate affixed to the former official residence of the Chief Clerk of the House, the greater part of which has now been annexed by the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet, and used by them as a place of retreat from the storm and strain of the actual chamber.

[1] Only once during the whole Tudor period did the number of the temporal lords amount to sixty.

Another innovation affecting the independence of the House of Commons was the direct nomination of the Speaker in all cases by the Crown. No less an authority than Sir Edward Coke candidly admitted that this open interference of the Sovereign was designed to avoid loss of time in disputing.[1] In spite of the increasing powers of the royal prerogative, it remained theoretically impossible for the Crown to levy any new tax without the assent of both Houses, and it became the business of the chiefs of Henry's secret service so to manage Parliament that the outward forms of the Constitution might at least be observed. Assuming Coke to be correct, it will be of interest to consider what manner of men Henry VII selected to preside over the House of Commons, and it will be seen that they were drawn both from the landed gentry and from the legal profession.

At Bosworth there had fought by his side Sir Thomas Lovell, of ancient lineage in Norfolk, and a kinsman of Francis, Viscount Lovell of Tichmarsh, Northants, an adherent of Richard III, whose ancestors had fought for the Conqueror at Senlac. When Thomas Lovell first entered Parliament it was as Knight of the Shire for Northants. A man of great and varied attainments, the King showed his appreciation of his services by making him Chancellor of the Exchequer for life, in which capacity he seems to have had a share, in conjunction with Morton, in the fiscal policy of Dudley and Empson. This connection may in part account for his having died enormously rich. In addition to the offices already mentioned, Lovell became President of the Council, Constable of the Tower

[1] Coke, *Institutes*, Vol. IV, p. 8.

Sir Thomas Lovell

1485

From the bronze medallion in
Henry VII Chapel Westminster Abbey
by Torrigiano

(under Henry VIII), and High Steward of both Oxford and Cambridge.

A Bencher also of Lincoln's Inn, he deserves to be remembered as the builder of the gate-house in Chancery Lane. Though often threatened with demolition, this interesting specimen of sixteenth-century brickwork, having many points of resemblance to the gate-towers of Eton and St. James's Palace, still guards the entrance to the Law and preserves on its outer face the Lovell arms. Its appearance is, however, much spoilt by the insertion of modern sash-windows in its venerable face. Previous to its erection in 1518, Lincoln's Inn had only been entered from Holborn. In quite recent days the Inn has suffered many indignities at the hands of an ill-informed if well-meaning body of Benchers. To modernise their Chapel and to undo the work of Inigo Jones, they called in a lawyer masquerading as an architect—the late Lord Grimthorpe, whose outrageous vandalism at St. Albans stands universally condemned as the most deplorable architectural failure of modern times. His iconoclastic hand, sweeping all before it and disfiguring all that it touched, fortunately stopped just short of Lovell's gateway, and it is to be hoped that this, the oldest building in any of the Inns of Court, is now safe from the unwelcome attentions of the restorer and the amateur architect.

At Westminster Lord Grimthorpe's energies were happily confined to the erection of "Big Ben."[1] This, the largest chiming clock in the world, was completed in 1860, but the hour bell was unfortunately cracked

[1] So called from Sir Benjamin Hall, First Commissioner of Works, 1855–58.

soon after it was placed in position. Its predecessor, "Great Tom of Westminster," which hung for centuries in a detached *clochard* dating from Plantagenet times, was given by William III to St. Paul's Cathedral when the tower was taken down after it had become ruinous. It is a conspicuous feature in Hollar's view of New Palace Yard.[1] When tolled Great Tom was said to have soured all the milk in Westminster.

Sir Thomas Lovell, soldier, statesman, and lawyer, was chosen Speaker of the Parliament which met on 7 November, 1485, "in Camera communiter dicta Crucis infra Palacium Westmonasterium," and one of his first official acts must have been to put the question to the House on the Bill for the reversal of his own attainder by Richard III. This, the first Tudor Parliament, was probably dissolved in March, 1486, after granting the King a liberal subsidy and attainting many of King Richard's followers. In the same year the Speaker's kinsman, Francis, Lord Lovell, headed an abortive rising in the north, but this does not seem to have impaired Sir Thomas's influence and intimacy with his Sovereign, as he continued to shower favours upon him, and selected him to be one of the executors of his will.

It is said that Lord Lovell's widow, fearing that Henry's vengeance would extend to her, retired after her husband's attainder to a lodge in Whittlebury Forest, where she lived for a time under the protection of gipsies. One of her sons is believed to have married a Romany bride and to have become their king, whence the common occurrence of the name of Lovell amongst the tribe. There are yeomen Lovells in Northamptonshire to this day, but

[1] Reproduced in this volume.

SIR JOHN MORDAUNT
1487
From a monumental effigy at Turvey Church, Beds.

the direct line of the Speaker appears to be extinct. In Henry VII's Chapel there has recently been placed, owing to the generosity of Sir J. C. Robinson, a fine bronze medallion of Sir Thomas, by Torregiano. It was brought from his manor-house at East Harling, Norfolk, and it is the earliest pictorial representation of a Speaker of the House of Commons, other than a monumental effigy or a brass, discovered up to the present time.[1] Lovell died at Elsing, in Middlesex, and was buried with great magnificence in a chantry chapel which he had built at the Nunnery of Holywell, in Shoreditch. As the last of the martial Speakers it is fitting that he should be worthily commemorated at Westminster, and in the magnificent mausoleum built by the first of the Tudor line.

Sir John Mordaunt, Knight of the Shire for Beds, was Speaker in the Parliament which created the Court of Star Chamber, and Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam, of Aldwark, Yorkshire, an ancestor of Earl Fitzwilliam, in Henry's third Parliament. A new House of Commons was summoned to meet on 17 October, 1491, and it chose for its Speaker, or rather it had forced upon it, Sir Richard Empson, Knight of the Shire for Northants, and, by repute, the son of a sievemaker at Towcester in that county. Parliament opened with alarums and excursions of war. The King announced his intention of heading an army to recover the ancient rights of England in France, and though after the fall of Sluys he crossed the Channel, the peace of Etaples was signed[2] without any further

[1] A reproduction of this beautiful work of mediæval art will be found in this volume.

[2] 3 November, 1492.

fighting. Empson and his *fidus achates*, Dudley, *par ignobile fratrum*, lived in adjoining houses in Walbrook, and, according to Stow, they had a "door of intercourse" from the garden which now belongs to Salters' Hall.

It would almost seem as if there was something in the atmosphere of this corner of the City peculiarly favourable to the accumulation of colossal wealth, for within a stone's-throw of Dudley and Empson's garden, and on a site adjoining Salters' Hall, stand Messrs. Rothschild's famous London offices. But here the parallel ceases. The royal extortioners never devoted any of their ill-gotten gains to relieving the necessities of the poor, whereas St. Swithin's Lane has been for more than a century, not only the chosen home of the true aristocracy of finance, but a business centre rightly associated in the public mind with unbounded charity, freely and unceasingly dispensed without regard to class or creed.

The next Parliament of the reign met at Westminster, 14 October, 1495, and chose for its Speaker Sir Robert Drury, a member of a Suffolk family long seated at Hawstead and Horningsheath in that county, a property now merged in the estates of the Marquis of Bristol. Drury is the first Speaker definitely known to have received a University education, and in this respect Cambridge takes the pride of place. Possibly the reversion to a Speaker of knightly degree and unconnected with the law was due to the fact that no sanction was required for any war tax. Parliament dealt instead with such domestic matters as vagabondage, gaming, the licensing of ale-houses, and other non-controversial matters, for even licensing Bills were strictly uncontentious in the fifteenth century.

SIR RICHARD EMPSON, 1491, AND EDMOND DUDLEY, 1503-4,
WITH HENRY VII
From a painting in the possession of the Duke of Rutland

In an unostentatious way some of the earlier Tudor Parliaments accomplished a fair amount of useful legislation. They passed laws against usury, generally, it is to be feared, a dead letter from the day they received the Royal Assent; they attempted to fix the labourer's wages; and, in their solicitude for his welfare, they even settled the hours at which he was to rise, and the time he was to spend at his meals. From this Speaker's family Drury Lane, where their town house was situated, derives its name, and it will also be familiar to many old Etonians from the well-known dame's house, founded by the Rev. Benjamin Drury, an assistant master under the redoubtable Keate. Sir Thomas Englefield, of Englefield, a Berkshire knight with a pedigree of fabulous antiquity, presided over Henry's sixth Parliament;[1] and, by way of contrast, the notorious Dudley, a Gray's Inn lawyer with an Oxford education and an assumed name, filled the Chair in his seventh and last. Empson was Chancellor of the Duchy at the same time, and these "two ravening wolves," as they have been called by an old chronicler, acting in concert, practised extortion and intimidation to an extent hitherto unknown in England. By browbeating the sheriffs they were able to nominate whom they pleased at elections; every infraction of the law, however antiquated, was punished by a heavy fine, verdicts were dictated to judges by men who were not judges themselves, but who seem to have acted as a committee of the Privy Council. The unscrupulous policy pursued by Dudley and Empson between 1504 and the King's death brought an immense sum of money into the royal treasury, whilst the "wolves" and

[1] Held in January, 1496–97.

their friends reaped no inconsiderable share of the spoil. From Dudley's *Tree of Commonwealth*, written during his imprisonment in 1510, it would seem that some scheme for the appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues had already engaged the attention of the Privy Council, and owing to his denunciations of abuses in the Church, the idea of the Reformation may have suggested itself to Henry VIII.

In connection with the House of Commons under the first of the Tudors, there only remains to be noticed Sir Reginald Bray, of Steyne, Co. Northants (a fruitful soil for the Speakership at this period), who has been assumed by many historical writers to have presided over the House of Commons. Bray's name, however, is nowhere to be found in the Rolls as having filled that high office, and such evidence as exists favours the presumption that he acted as President of a great Council, and not a fully equipped Parliament, which assembled at Westminster on 24 October, 1496. As it was attended by the Lords spiritual and temporal, the serjeants-at-law and burgesses and merchants from the principal cities and boroughs, and as it pledged itself to an expenditure of £120,000 to be used in the invasion of Scotland, it had many of the attributes of a regular Parliament, and for that reason it has seemed desirable to include Bray's name in this catalogue of honour. Like Speaker Lovell, he had fought at Bosworth, where he plucked Richard's crown out of a hawthorn bush, into which it had been cast in the moment of defeat. The Brays adopted the hawthorn as their badge, and it was formerly to be seen in one of the painted windows of the manor house at Steyne.[1]

[1] It also reappears amongst the fragments of contemporary stained glass in Henry VII's Chapel.

SIR ROBERT DRURY
1495
From a monumental effigy in St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds

The biographical dictionaries, without exception, confidently state that Sir Reginald Bray was the architect of Henry VII's Chapel, and that he put the finishing touches to St. George's in Windsor Castle, in which latter building he lies buried without a monument. But this statement requires examination, and has too hastily been accepted as correct. Bray was undoubtedly a patron of architecture, but he was certainly not the architect, in the modern sense of the word, of the royal mausoleum at Westminster. To Robert Vertue, the greatest of a distinguished family of builders, belongs the honour of having designed that noble work.[1] All that Bray did at Windsor was to buy the materials—the stone, timber, lead, glass, etc.—and to pay the architect's salary and the wages of the men. He seems to have done the same at the royal palaces of Richmond and Greenwich, where Vertue again worked under him. Moreover, Bray died in 1503, when the great chapel at Westminster was only just beginning to rise from its foundations, nor was it fully finished at the King's death in 1509. He had been associated with the fiscal abuses of Morton, Fox, and Empson, and he appointed the last-named to be an executor of his will. Sir Reginald was a man of great wealth. He "had the greatest freedom of any councillor with the King," who granted to him, amongst others, the forfeited estates of Francis, Lord Lovell, but his claim to be considered a great master of design is unfounded. The mind is insensibly drawn from his supposed share in the beauti-

[1] See Professor Lethaby's *Westminster Abbey*, 1906, p. 225. Vertue's name has been strangely overlooked by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and the omission is the more to be regretted as he was essentially a master of the English school.

fying of the Abbey to what was actually accomplished at Westminster by the King's craftsmen.

In private life Henry VII was a pious man and a frugal liver, but his love of art and architecture caused him to be lavish in the prosecution of his building schemes. He had amassed a fortune estimated at sixteen millions of the present value of money, and he spared no expense in the erection of the royal tomb-house, with the result that he has stamped his personality upon Westminster more than any King of England since Henry III. The last of all the great works of the Benedictine Abbey, for Wren's additions were in the nature of repairs and restorations, the magnificent chapel erected between 1502 and 1509 was originally intended as a mausoleum for the remains of Henry VI. Its exterior has been much spoilt by injudicious restoration early in the nineteenth century,[1] but the interior ranks amongst the highest achievements of Gothic art in this country.

" Far in advance," to quote the words of the Abbey's latest historian, Mr. Francis Bond, " of anything of contemporary date in England, or France, or Italy, or Spain, it shows us Gothic architecture not sinking into senile decay, as some have idly taught, but bursting forth, Phœnix-like, into new life, instinct with the freshness, originality and inventiveness of youth." The fan-vaulting of its matchless roof, pieced together with the accuracy and precision of an astronomical instrument, is, by common consent, the most wonderful achievement of masonry ever wrought by the hand of man. Its

[1] In the words of William Morris : " Wyatt managed to take all the romance out of the exterior of this most romantic work of the late Middle Ages."

SIR REGINALD BRAY

1496

From a drawing in the possession of Mr. Justice Bray of a window in the Priory Church, Malvern

pendants, seeming to rest on unsubstantial air, look down upon the finest piece of embellished metal-work in all England—the gilt bronze railing, or "grate" as it is called in contemporary writings—which surrounds the tombs of Henry and Elizabeth of York. Their recumbent effigies, on which Torregiano was engaged for many years, are admitted to be among the greatest of their kind. Novel as was Robert Vertue's system of vaulting in England, his scheme of exterior abutment is even more strikingly original. By substituting octagonal domed turrets for the flying buttresses of an earlier age, the architect not only economised space, but introduced into his scheme of fenestration a new and attractive feature. The windows, no longer mere flat insertions, are here made to follow the curved lines of the exterior walls, with the happiest results of light and shade.

The beauty of Henry VII's Chapel induced Barry to adopt the Tudor style for the new Houses of Parliament. With all their imperfections, of which not the least was the selection of a stone which has proved incapable of resisting the destructive effect of the London atmosphere, they stand out by themselves as the most picturesque Gothic building, on a large scale, added to the metropolis in the nineteenth century. The daring combination of gilding and masonry exhibited in both the Victoria and the Clock Towers has elicited nothing but commendation from qualified critics, while the design of the members' private staircase is held to equal that at Christ Church, Oxford, in lightness and elegance, than which no higher praise can be given.

The mistake of employing a Gothic architect to design

a classical building, which Lord Palmerston made when Sir Gilbert Scott was selected to build the Home and Foreign Offices, is only too apparent in Whitehall. That artistic failure should have taught a lesson to successive Commissioners of Works, but not much can be said in praise of the more recently erected Public Offices, mostly of a machine-made type, which line what ought to be the finest thoroughfare in London—the approach from Trafalgar Square to Westminster.

At the present time London happens to want a dignified and adequate memorial to King Edward VII. What an opportunity for a First Commissioner of Works to immortalise himself by reconstructing Trafalgar Square and the main approach to the Houses of Parliament on an heroic scale! If he could obtain the necessary funds there is actually a vacant pedestal awaiting him in the finest site in Europe, whereon he might, in course of time, be exhibited to a grateful posterity as a pendant in extravagance to George IV.

The formation of a *Via Regia* from the Forum to the Senate, such as would have delighted ancient Rome, would present no insuperable difficulty to Paris, or even to Berlin. Yet the example of the New Processional Road through the Mall, which, whilst it opens up a clearer view of the hideous front of Buckingham Palace, destroyed a genuine relic of seventeenth-century London, almost makes one despair of the artistic future of metropolitan improvements. Leaving St. James's Park by a well-proportioned triple arch the scheme of the architect has been choked and strangled at its birth for want of the funds required to demolish a few insignificant business premises. To buy out the banks, clubs, hotels, and shops which dis-

figure three sides of Trafalgar Square would cost a large sum, but a beginning might be made by sweeping away the paltry fountains feebly spurting from amidst a waste of sombre asphalte. And although the public sentiment would probably not approve of any material alteration in the central feature of the nation's memorial to Nelson, our sympathy is rather with the survivor of the *Victory's* crew who exclaimed, on being invited to admire the gigantic column: "Well, I'm blessed if they haven't mast-headed the Admiral!"

At the accession of Henry VIII continuous Parliamentary government was neither expected nor desired by the constituencies, and the burden of paying their representatives at Westminster would account for no public indignation being evoked, when nearly six years elapsed [1] before a new Parliament was called. When at last it did meet it sat for less than a month, and, though at its opening the Chancellor, Archbishop Warham, expatiated on the necessity of making good laws and spoke of the constitutional assembly as "the stomach of the nation," the legislative output of the session was infinitesimal, and when, after the Houses had granted the King a liberal subsidy, the dissolution was reached,[2] the only concession made to popular opinion was the condemnation of Dudley and Empson, who expiated their crimes on Tower Hill in the following August.[3]

Assuredly, this was the only occasion in Parliamentary history when two former Speakers died on the same day. Yet in the seventeenth century the situation was nearly

[1] Between 1504 and January, 1509–10.

[2] On 23 February.

[3] This stop-gap Parliament was presided over by Sir Thomas Englefield, who had preceded Dudley in the Chair during the last reign.

paralleled, when Chaloner Chute and Lislebone Long died within a month of one another, and in the eighteenth, when Mr. Speaker Cornwall expired within twenty-four hours of his old antagonist Fletcher Norton. It would be interesting to know, remembering his former intimacy with the twin extortioners, what were Speaker Lovell's feelings when he heard that Dudley and Empson were to be brought to the block. As it was, he lived just long enough to see the profession of the law once more preferred to the Chair in the person of Sir Thomas More, the gifted author of *Utopia*—that happy land which he described as having few laws and no lawyers.

The temporary eclipse of the House of Lords as a legislative body enabled Henry VIII to introduce Bills into the Upper House which had previously been prepared by the Privy Council, in concert with the law officers of the Crown; to pass them rapidly through that complacent assembly; and to present them cut and dried to a packed House of Commons. The practice of referring Government measures to the consideration of a committee of both Houses was also initiated by the Tudors. At the same time the power of the Crown over the legislature was much increased by so manipulating the elections as to ensure the return of the King's Household officers. And while Henry was careful to lay stress upon the independence of Parliament in his communications with the Pope, there is abundant evidence to the effect that, aided as the King was by Thomas Cromwell, the constituencies had little or no free choice in the election of their representatives.

The earliest and crudest form of intimidating voters was to beat them off by armed force on the day of the

poll, as related in the Paston letters, and even where no coercion was employed the preliminaries to election were often accompanied by strange and novel conditions. Some amusing instances of payment in kind for Parliamentary service occur in the fifteenth century, as when John Strange entered into an agreement with the bailiffs of Dunwich to give his attendance at Westminster "for a cade of full herring" whether the House "holds long time or short," while the borough of Weymouth at the same period was able to secure a member to watch over its interests at the even cheaper rate of five hundred mackerel. Five shillings a week was all that Ipswich was willing to pay for the services of William Worsop in 1472, whilst John Walworth, the junior member, covenanted to serve for as little as three shillings and four pence!

Though little is heard of direct bribery in the sixteenth century, instances occurred of members compounding with their constituents by agreeing to accept less than the statutory allowance for travelling expenses. Some even went so far as to offer to serve altogether without pay. This negative form of bribery became increasingly common in the reign of Henry VIII, and the city of Canterbury, overjoyed, on one occasion, at having saved the wages of one of its members who stayed away from Westminster on account of the plague, actually rewarded him for his abstention. There is this much to be said for bribery as understood and practised in olden days. The briber did at least pay the money out of his own pocket, therefore the revenues of the State did not suffer. Nowadays the would-be briber offers the money of the State in order to corrupt voters, and whilst party leaders talk grandiloquently of the great constitutional

issues involved in a general election, the actual canvassing for votes in many constituencies turns mainly on the granting of pecuniary rewards by the State.

The seventeenth century brought with it increased cost to candidates, but bribery was not translated into a fine art until the division of the House of Commons into parties, each anxious to turn the other out and obtain the spoils of office, became an accomplished fact. Wasteful expenditure at contested elections attained its height towards the end of the eighteenth century, but since 1832 bribery in an acute form has tended steadily to decline. Traces of the old leaven occasionally manifested themselves far on into the nineteenth century, but under an extended franchise, and a pure and beneficent system—which substitutes cheerfully paid subscriptions and charitable donations for the wholesale treating and degrading corruption of the electorate prevailing within the memory of many still living—the cost of entering the House of Commons, and, what is often more difficult, of securing re-election at the second attempt, is now appreciably less than it was before the passing of the Corrupt Practices Act of 1883.

Although it has not been possible to discover that the measures adopted by Thomas Cromwell to secure a compliant House of Commons included anything in the nature of wholesale pecuniary corruption, the constant pressure put upon the sheriffs and mayors by the Privy Council was so stringent and so far-reaching that throughout the period of the Reformation the popular assembly was almost entirely subservient to the Sovereign, from the Speaker in his Chair to the humblest burgess. To a House so constituted was assigned the

spade work of severing England from Rome and despoiling the Church, and, owing to the spirit of independence being almost wholly absent from its deliberations, it became possible for the real rulers of the country, under the thin disguise of a constitutional movement which was in reality a hollow sham, to rob the English people of a faith which, of their own free will, they had never deliberately rejected.

Henry's second Parliament, a "War Parliament" as it has been called, was presided over by Sir Robert Sheffield, of Butterwick, near Boston, in Lincolnshire, an ancestor of the Dukes of Buckingham of that family.[1] The ancient seat of the Sheffields had been at a place called Hemmeswelle, but a fortunate match with the heiress of Delves enabled the Speaker to build extensively at Butterwick, in the Isle of Axeholme.

It has been supposed that the Speakers had no official residence at Westminster until a much later period, but from the journal of a Venetian traveller, who visited England in 1512, it appears that not only did the Speaker thus early live within the precincts of the Palace, but that a certain amount of ceremonial hospitality was expected of him by the general body of members :—

"The Parliament has begun, that is to say all the gentlemen of the Kingdom have come, and are making a Parliament in the Palace of the King called *Vasmonestier*, distant from London less than two miles ; and all the gentlemen who come have houses in London, and it

[1] Speaker Sheffield was buried in 1518 in the church of the Augustinian Friars. This, which has been since 1550 the meeting-place of the Dutch Communion in London, was for centuries a favourite burying-place with the greater nobility and the wealthier City merchants.

behoves them to pass before the door of the House of the Worshipful Speaker, as well those who go by land as those who go by water; for there is a river called the Tamixa, whereon they can go in 100 boats, made after their fashion, from London to the said *Vasmonestier*. And they are bound to pass before the said worshipful house; and having reached the said door, these gentlemen, for the love they bear to the magnificent and worshipful speaker, visit him with 16 and more or less servants; some come to dinner and some to breakfast (*colation*), for this is the custom of the country: they have breakfast every morning. . . . Every morning he goes to Mass with some of these gentlemen, who hold him by the arms and walk up and down with him for an hour; then they go to the Council and he to his house."[1]

During Sheffield's tenure of the Chair[2] a disastrous fire broke out in the Palace of Westminster, and many old buildings between the Great Hall and the Abbey were destroyed. Details of the calamity, which occurred in 1512, are scanty. The Hall itself, the Painted Chamber, St. Stephen's Chapel, the Star Chamber, and the Clock Tower escaped injury, but many of the King's private apartments were burnt. This fire, by no means the first in which the Palace had been involved, was the primary cause of the removal of the Court, first to Bridewell and thence, after the fall of Wolsey, to Whitehall.

Apparently the Cloister Court of St. Stephen's, dating

[1] This delightful bit of Parliamentary anecdote will be found in *Gentlemen Errant*, by Mrs. Henry Cust, 1909, p. 512, note.

[2] The *Dictionary of National Biography*, following Manning, says that Sheffield had also been Speaker in 1510, but the Rolls conclusively prove that Englefield was Speaker from 23 January, 1509–10, until 23 February. And as under the old style the year was reckoned to begin on 25 March, Parliament was not actually in session at any time in 1510.

Hans Holbein, pinxt. *Robert Grave sculpt.*

SIR ROBERT SHEFFIELD
1511-2
From a print

from the middle of the fourteenth century, was involved in the conflagration, for it is known to have been rebuilt in 1526 by Dr. John Chambers, the last Dean of the *Saint Chapelle* of the Palace. A bell tower rising on the east side of Westminster Hall escaped the flames in 1512, and was heightened when the Cloister Court was rebuilt, only to be once more practically destroyed in the still greater fire of 1834.

Its subsequent restoration by Sir Charles Barry ranks as one of the most successful achievements of that architect at Westminster.

In the library of Hatfield House are two interesting plans, drawn by John Symonds in 1593, showing in detail the various buildings between the Great Hall and the Receipt of the Exchequer as they existed when Coke sat in the Speaker's Chair.

The Palace of Bridewell was only divided from the Blackfriars by the Fleet Ditch, and in consequence of the damage caused by the fire at Westminster, the sittings of Parliament were temporarily held in the Priory.

The next Speaker after Sheffield was Sir Thomas Nevill, fifth son of the second Baron Bergavenny. He was voted to the Chair on 6 February, 1514-15, and held office till the dissolution, on 22 December. When he was presented for the royal approval in the House of Lords he had the honour of knighthood conferred upon him in the presence of the assembled Lords and Commons, "the like whereof was never known before." During the session an Act was passed which laid down that no knight, citizen, or burgess "do depart until Parliament be fully finished except he have licence of the Speaker and the same be entered in the book of the

clerk," upon pain of losing his wages. An earlier statute of Richard II had dealt with the subject of absenting members and the penalties to be inflicted for non-attendance at Westminster.

In the reign of Elizabeth, and probably earlier, the House was called over at the opening of every session, and members in their places answered to their names. But in spite of all attempts to ensure regular attendance, there were frequent complaints of scanty houses in Tudor times, and even such expedients as locking the doors and forcibly preventing members who were present from leaving until the business of the day was concluded proved ineffectual; nor has it ever been possible to devise any effective machinery for securing a full attendance of members throughout the lifetime of a Parliament, or even during a single session. The accurate reporting of debates, the publication of the division lists, and the fierce light which now beats upon the doings of private members, to say nothing of ministers of the Crown, has done more to ensure constant attendance than any penal resolutions passed by the House in order to meet individual cases.

After an interval of over seven years a new Parliament met, not at Westminster, but again in the Great Chamber of the Priory at Blackfriars, where now stands the *Times* office. It chose for its Speaker a man in the prime of life, the member for Middlesex, no other than the great Sir Thomas More, the first layman, with one exception, to be Chancellor of England. It was not his first appearance in the House, for in the previous reign he had successfully resisted a grant to the King, for which temerity, as it would have been a violation

SIR THOMAS NEVILL
1514-15
From a Memorial Brass in Mereworth Church, Kent

of the Constitution to punish a member for his vote, More's aged father was imprisoned and fined. This truly great man may be said to have only flitted across the stage of the House of Commons, for the session of 1523 lasted less than four months. Short as it was, it is memorable for the wholly unconstitutional irruption of Wolsey into the Chamber to demand a grant of £800,000[1] in order to carry on the war with France.[2]

The proposed tax, which was in the nature of a graduated toll upon income and property amounting to four shillings in the pound upon land and goods, was unparalleled in amount, and was stoutly resisted, though More, who seems to have considered it justified under the circumstances, urged the House to comply with the royal demands. But when the Cardinal entered, after the question of his being admitted at all had been debated at length, he was met by a chilling and preconcerted silence. "Masters," cried Wolsey, "unless it be the manner of your House, as in likelihood it is, by the mouth of your Speaker whom you have chosen for trusty and wise (as

[1] About £12,000,000 at the present computation of money.

[2] In Fiddes' *Life of Wolsey*, 1724, there is a representation, at page 302, of Henry VIII sitting in Parliament (? at Blackfriars) with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Warham), Cardinal Wolsey, the mitred Abbots, the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem, and the temporal peers. The Clerk of the Parliaments and his assistant are shown kneeling behind one of the woolsacks, and the Speaker of the House of Commons with several members of the Lower House are standing at the bar.

This print, which was communicated to Fiddes by John Anstis, Garter, in 1722, bears a striking resemblance to a plate printed in Pinkerton's *Iconographica Scotica* from a drawing formerly in the Heralds' College, but not now to be found there, supposed to represent Edward I with the King of Scotland, and Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, in Parliament assembled. It is probably, however, of much later date and of little or no historical value.

indeed he is) in such cases to utter your mind, here is, without doubt, a marvellous obstinate silence." Falling upon his knees, More replied that though the Commons might entertain communications from without, it was not according to precedent to enter into debate with outsiders.

Thomas Cromwell, the man who, a few years later, was more than any other responsible for the spoliation of the Church and the degradation of the House of Commons, sat in this Parliament for the first time. Combining the unpopular profession of a solicitor with the disreputable one of a money-lender, by the double experience so gained he made himself the master of the secrets of half the aristocracy, including many members of both Houses. On the present occasion he was not acting under Henry's orders, and he delivered a telling speech against the war. Not till 13 May did the House consent to grant any portion of the land tax, and then only a much lesser sum than Wolsey would be satisfied with.

The burgesses, who declared that the tax was only intended to affect the squires and the land, declined to vote at all. A few days later the House adjourned for Whitsuntide; but on its reassembling a proposal that, in addition to the sum derived from landed estate, one shilling in the pound should be levied on goods was supported by the squires, and vehemently opposed by the borough members. It was only by the personal intervention of the Speaker that the differences of the country party and the burgesses were composed and the tax finally voted. At the close of the session Cromwell wrote to a friend: "Ye shall understand that I,

SIR THOMAS MORE
1523
From a painting at the Speaker's House

amongst others, have endured a Parliament which continued by the space of seventeen whole weeks where we communed of war, peace, strife, contention, debate, murmur, grudge, riches, poverty, trouble, falsehood, justice and equity. . . . Howbeit we have done as well as we might and left off where we began."

After the Great Hall of Blackfriars, the scene of Katherine of Arragon's trial before Cardinal Campeggio, ceased to be used for Parliamentary purposes, the site of the Priory was devoted to various secular uses, and many famous names are found in connection with it.

A theatre, in which no less a man than Shakespeare trod the boards, flourished in the old home of the monks from the reign of Elizabeth until all theatrical enterprise was stifled under the Commonwealth.[1]

Vandyck, on his first coming to London, took a house in the precincts, where he had been preceded by Isaac Oliver and other painters. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the first John Walter set up his logographic press in Printing House Square, and laid the foundations of a gigantic instrument of popular enlightenment—the greatest newspaper the world has ever seen. Here, almost on the identical spot where More confronted Wolsey, Delane sat in the editorial chair of *The Times* for thirty-six arduous years.

It would be superfluous, if not impertinent, to dwell in these pages upon More's subsequent career and tragic fate. There is in the Speaker's house a recently acquired portrait of the great Chancellor in the Holbein manner, but it is at best a contemporary copy. Another

[1] Play House Yard preserves the association of the drama with Blackfriars to this day.

Sir Thomas, cast in a very different mould, succeeded More as Speaker, and also on the Woolsack. This was Thomas Audley, a "sordid slave," according to Lord Campbell, whose promotion coincided with Wolsey's disgrace. The "Black" or Reformation Parliament, an epoch in our national history, met at Westminster in November, 1529, and was not dissolved until 1536, so that it was easily the longest known to that time. If not actually packed with the nominees of the Crown, as far as it was possible to control the elections, only candidates hostile to the Church were held to be eligible. "With the Commons it is nothing but down with the Church," said the Bishop of Rochester from his place in the House of Lords in the course of the first session. While Audley was in the Chair only the outworks of the Church were laid siege to, and not till after his transfer to the Woolsack, when Sir Humphrey Wingfield became Speaker, did the actual severance from Rome take place.[1]

Audley left no male heir, but his grandson Thomas, Earl of Suffolk, ultimately inherited his vast wealth, and built Audley End in Essex between 1603 and 1616. It is said to be the largest private house in England, and to have cost £200,000. The Chancellor died in 1544, and was buried in a chapel which he had built at Saffron Walden in his native county. An elaborate monument was

[1] The Acts contrived by Cromwell in 1533–34 in order to ensure the final breach with Rome were four in number: "An Act for the submission of the Clergy to the King's Majesty," "An Act restraining the payment of annates," "An Act concerning the exoneration of the King's subjects from exactions and impositions heretofore paid to the see of Rome, and for having Licences and Dispensations within this Realm without suing further for the same," and "An Act declaring the establishment of succession of the King's most Royal Majesty in the Imperial Crown of this Realm."

SIR THOMAS AUDLEY
1529
From a painting at the Speaker's House

erected to his memory. His portrait in official robes with gold-laced sleeves is in the Speaker's house. With the exception of that of Sir Thomas More it is the earliest in point of date in the collection, but the painting is not earlier than the eighteenth century, having probably been painted to order with several others of the series.

Wingfield, in early life a protégé of Wolsey, though not otherwise remarkable, deserves mention for his having been the first Speaker to sit for a borough constituency. Sir Robert Brooke, *temp.* Mary I, is said by Hakewil and others to have been the first burgess so honoured, but this is inaccurate. Wingfield represented Great Yarmouth in 1529, and Sir John Say, who was Speaker in 1448-49, had represented the borough of Cambridge before he became a Knight of the Shire. The salary received by Wingfield was £100 a year. Sprung from an old East Anglian family of Brantham Hall, in the county of Suffolk, he was educated at Gray's Inn, where his coat of arms is still to be seen in a north window of the hall.

The precedent set in Wingfield's case was soon followed, for Sir Richard Rich, of Leigh's Priory, Co. Essex, sat for Colchester when elected to the Chair in 1536. Hypocrite, perjurer, oppressor, and time-server, he is without manner of doubt the most despicable man who ever sat in the Chair of the Commons. Shrinking from no infamy so long as he was on the winning side, he had a part in the fall of Wolsey, the deaths of More (whose conviction was only obtained on Rich's perjured evidence), of Fisher, Cromwell, Wriothesley, the Protector Somerset, and his brother Lord Seymour of Sudeley

and of Northumberland. A monster in human shape, Rich stretched the rack with his own hands when Anne Askew was put to torture in the Tower.[1] During the short session of 1536—for it sat little more than a month—Parliament passed an Act by which Elizabeth as well as Mary was declared illegitimate, the King having married Jane Seymour shortly before the Houses met.

Before another Parliament was summoned Edward the Confessor's golden shrine had been hacked down by sacrilegious hands, and the Abbey despoiled of its treasures, an irreparable loss to the nation as well as to the Church. At the same time the priceless jewelled shrine of Becket at Canterbury was totally destroyed, and the spoils, which are said to have filled six-and-twenty carts, were swept into the royal treasury. The "Regale of France," a large diamond which was considered to be one of its chief glories, was long worn by Henry as a ring, and it is shown on his enormous thumb in some of his later portraits. It reappeared in the inventory of Queen Mary's jewels, after which date its history cannot be traced. Rich was one of the principal gainers through the disposition of the monastic lands. Henry VIII gave him St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, as his share of the spoils of the Reformation, and he made his town house in Cloth Fair. Long known as Warwick House, it was standing in quite recent years.

In the list of Speakers in the library of the House of Commons, the date of Rich's advancement to the Chair

[1] Rich was then Chancellor of the Augmentations, and Wriothesley, who was associated with him in the torture of this unfortunate woman, was Chancellor.

SIR HUMPHREY WINGFIELD

1533

From a painting in the possession of Major J. M. Wingfield, Tickencote Hall, Stamford

is given as 1537, but this is an obvious error, as no Parliament was summoned in that year. He resigned the Great Seal in 1551, and died in 1567 or 1568.[1] There is a recumbent effigy of him in Felstead Church, but the inscription on the tomb has been destroyed.

Sir Nicholas Hare, another compliant tool of Henry VIII, was Speaker in 1539–40—in the Parliament which passed the atrocious Act known as the "Whip with six strings." Hare was also Keeper of the Great Seal, though only for fourteen days. There is some doubt as to the constituency he represented whilst he was Speaker. One of the name sat for Downton in 1529, and Hare is supposed to have been Knight of the Shire for Norfolk in 1539, though the official returns for that year are wanting. He was the ancestor of the Hares of Stow Hall in that county, having bought the hundred of Clackhouse (which included Stow Bardolph) from Lord North in 1553. Appointed Master of the Rolls in that year, he died in Chancery Lane and was buried in the Temple Church.

It should be mentioned that he was absent during part of the session of 1539–40, having been committed to the Tower for advising Sir John Skelton how to evade the Statute of Uses in his will. This was deemed to be an infringement of the royal prerogative. He was released in Easter Term, 1540, and, strange to say, his imprisonment does not seem to have been considered a

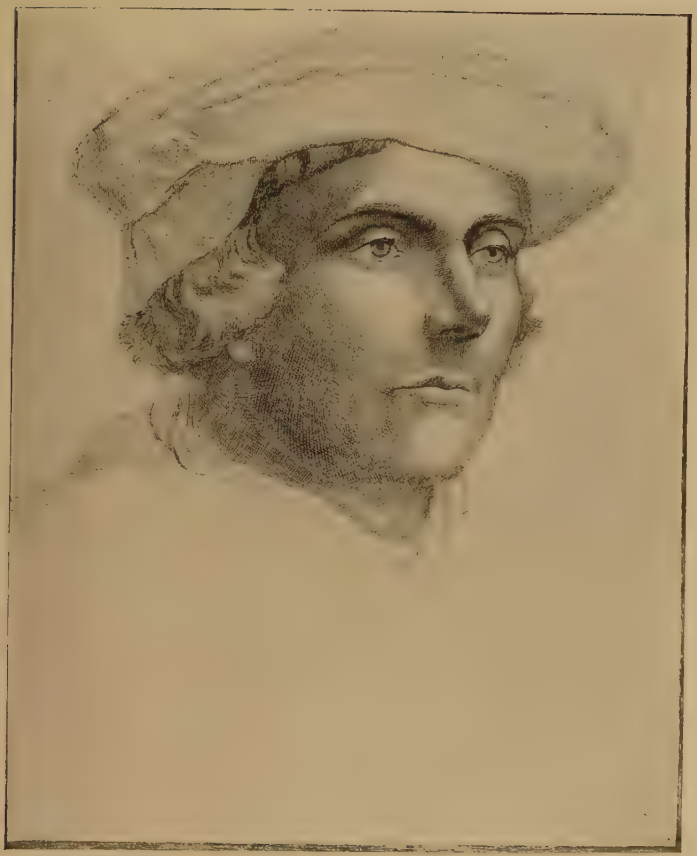
[1] The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives the earlier and the *Complete Peerage* the later date, and they are also at variance as to the year of his birth. The Earls of Warwick and Holland were descended from him, hence the name of Warwick House, Smithfield.

breach of privilege. To such a degree of subserviency was the House reduced that even the imprisonment of its Speaker passed without remonstrance.

The next Parliament, which passed the Act for the Reformation of Religion, chose for its Speaker Sir Thomas Moyle. Originally a Cornish family, the Moyles migrated to Kent in the fifteenth century. In Queen Mary's reign Sir Thomas posed as a true friend of the Reformation, and vacated his seat rather than support the policy of Rome. He died at Eastwell, near Ashford, in 1560, and his youngest daughter married Sir Thomas Finch, the progenitor of the Earls of Winchilsea and Nottingham, thus carrying the estate into a family which gave two subsequent Speakers to the House of Commons. During Moyle's Speakership occurs an early use of the well-known term "Member of Parliament." Henry VIII, writing to the Deputy and Council of Ireland, apropos of O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, said: "But you must remember that the heir of the Earl of Thomond from henceforth must abide his time to be admitted as a Member of our Parliament till his father or parent shall be deceased, and to be only a hearer standing bareheaded at the bar beside the Cloth of Estate as the young Lords do here in our realm of England." [1]

It has been thought that Rich again filled the Chair in Henry's ninth and last Parliament, but from an entry which the present writer found in the Registers of the Privy Council, it appears that Sir John Baker, whom previous writers have not noticed in this connection until the reign of Edward VI, was the next to hold the office. February 7, 1546–47. "Also Sir John Baker had

[1] *State Papers*, III, 395.



Hans Holbein, delt. *R. Dalton, fecit.*

SIR RICHARD RICH
1536
From a print

warrant to the Treasurer and Chamberlains of the Exchequer for £100 to be given to him in consideration of his service in the room of Speaker in the last session of the Parliament as hath been heretofore accustomed." It was also customary for the Speaker to receive an allowance for his diet, five pounds for every private Bill passed by both Houses, and five pounds for every name in any Bill for denizens, unless he agreed to accept less. [*Harleian Miscellany*, Vol. IV, page 561.] On Christmas Eve, 1545, Henry made the last of his many speeches to Parliament, urging the nation to religious unity, and on 31 January, 1546–47, the day that Wriothesley announced the King's death, only just in time to save the Duke of Norfolk from a traitor's death, Parliament was dissolved.

Sir John Baker, who was re-elected Speaker in Edward VI's first Parliament, was the head of an old Kentish family seated at Sissinghurst, near Cranbrook. He erected a castle, long since dismantled, on a commanding site overlooking the Weald. Originally a quadrangular edifice of great extent and profusely ornamented in the Tudor style, it has fallen by gradual stages from its former high estate until little remains of Speaker Baker's building with the exception of one wing, now converted into cottages and stabling, and a lofty tower, of somewhat unusual design, capped by two conical turrets.

After being bred to the Law, Baker was sent Ambassador to Denmark by Henry VIII, and, in the same year in which he was called to the Chair,[1] he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, a post which he continued

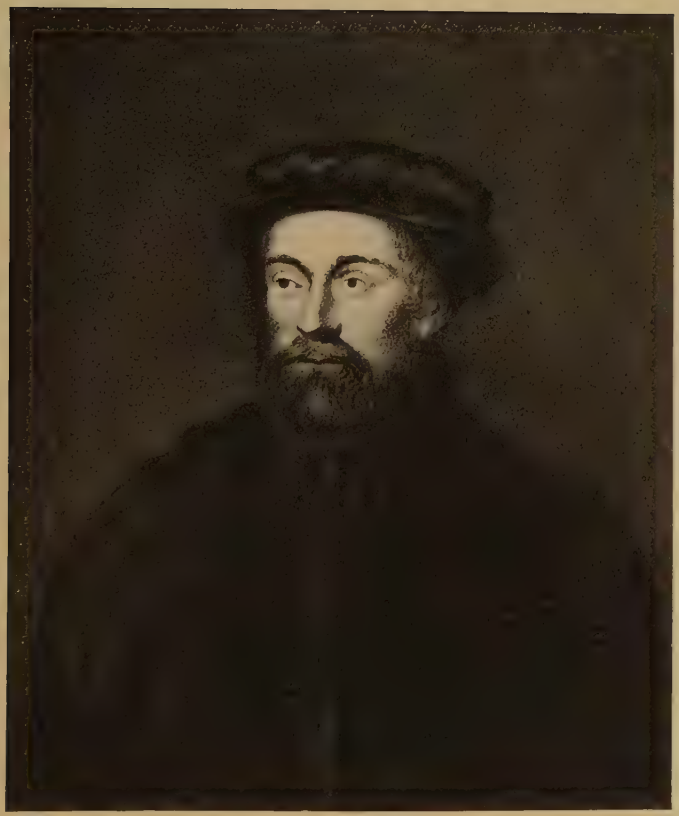
[1] 1545.

to fill until the death of Queen Mary in 1558. His zeal for the Roman faith coinciding with a ruthless persecution of Kentish Protestants caused him to be known and execrated throughout the Weald as "Bloody Baker." Some of his hapless neighbours, after being arraigned before him, were burnt at Maidstone for their religious convictions, and it is said that, having procured an order from the Privy Council for sending yet two more to the stake, it was only at the last moment that their lives were miraculously spared. The ex-Speaker was riding towards Cranbrook with full intent to carry his sinister purpose into effect, when, at a spot where three roads meet, known to this day as Baker's Cross, the bells of the parish church intimated to him that Elizabeth had ascended the throne.

Sir John Baker died in London in 1558, but his body was brought down to Cranbrook and buried with great ceremony in the church there. A monument erected to his memory was accidentally destroyed in 1725 when, on opening the family vault, a portion of the middle aisle fell down owing to the loosening of one of the supporting arches.

The Bakers ceased to be connected with Sissinghurst in the eighteenth century, and the dilapidated castle came into the possession of Horace Walpole's correspondent, Sir Horace Mann. During the Seven Years' War it was used as a place of confinement for French prisoners, as many as three thousand being horded together in it at one time. After their withdrawal in 1763 it was uninhabited for about twenty years, and in 1784 the parochial authorities hired the premises from Sir Horace Mann for the purpose of a poor-house.

With the dissolution of the ecclesiastical houses the



SIR JOHN BAKER
1545, 1547
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

long and intimate connection between the Abbey and the House of Commons came to an end. It ceased to meet in the precincts of St. Peter's and took possession of the disused Chapel of St. Stephen in the Palace of Westminster. It met there for the first time on 4 November, 1547, and by a singular coincidence the city of Westminster now first obtained separate representation in the House.[1]

The posthumous generosity of Henry VIII involved a heavy charge on the Exchequer, and, Somerset's ambitious policy entailing great expense, such old devices as tampering with the coinage were once more resorted to, and endeavours were made to persuade Parliament to grant the King the lands held by guilds and fraternities, and to sell them in order to supply the pressing necessities of the Government.

But the new House of Commons was not quite so subservient as some of its predecessors, and it became necessary for the State to come to terms with the most determined opponents of the measure in the House. From entries in the Registers of the Privy Council we gather that systematic obstruction and many of the devices of modern Parliamentary tactics were not unknown. Lynn and Coventry were two boroughs principally affected, and the Council came to the conclusion that " the article for the guildable lands should be dashed" (this being the current phraseology for the rejection of a Bill or one of its articles or clauses), since " the time of the

[1] The Journals of the House begin with this Parliament; on the first page Baker's election to the Chair is recorded, but the appointments of several subsequent Speakers are unnoticed in their pages, and the earlier Journals are, in many respects, of a fragmentary character.

prorogation being hard at hand the whole body of the Act might sustain peril unless by some good policy the principal speakers against the passing of that article might be stayed."[1] History has a habit of repeating itself, and three hundred years later than Protector Somerset, ministers of the Crown have often had occasion to resort to very similar measures in "staying" loquacious members, so that unpopular "articles" in Government Bills should not be "dashed."

Early in 1549 the Act of Uniformity passed through both Houses and the celebration of the Mass in England was prohibited after the month of May. At the dissolution in 1552 the Privy Council directed the payment of fifty marks to John Seymour, "Clerk of the Lower House of Parliament," for his pains (and in 1554 he received the same sum), but it is not stated that the Speaker received any reward for his services.[2]

The second and last Parliament of Edward VI, like so many of its predecessors, was a packed assembly. Sir James Dyer,[3] who appears to have been the willing tool of Northumberland, then at the zenith of his power, was its Speaker. The House only sat for a month, and almost the only Act of importance which it passed was one for the suppression of the Bishopric of Durham. Speaker Dyer's portrait in judge's robes, for he became Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in 1560, in which capacity he was noted for an incorruptible integrity, has recently been added to the National Portrait Gallery.

[1] Acts of the Privy Council, 6 May, 1548.

[2] *Ibid.*, 15 May, 1552.

[3] Youngest son of Richard Dyer, of Wincanton and Roundhill, Co. Somerset.

SIR JAMES DYER

1552-3

Reproduced from an original painting in the possession of Canon Mayo, of Long Burton, Farley

SIR ROBERT BROOKE
1554
From a drawing at the National Portrait Gallery

SIR CLEMENT HEIGHAM
1554
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

Just as the country seemed to be settling down into Protestantism, a state of affairs which coincided with the apportionment of the remaining lands of the Church amongst the members of the Privy Council, Edward VI, whose health had long been precarious, grew suddenly worse, and on 6 July, 1553, he died. The Council, controlled by the Duke of Northumberland, who wished to place his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne, were anxious to keep Mary misinformed as to her brother's death. But from Kenninghall, whither she had summoned Sir Clement Heigham, a staunch Catholic and a subsequent Speaker of the House of Commons, Mary sent a spirited message to the Council in London asserting her rights, and from that moment the tide of public opinion turned in her favour. She set up her standard at Framlingham, was proclaimed Queen at Norwich, and within a month she entered London in triumph.

On 1 October she was crowned at Westminster amidst every sign of popular rejoicing. Five days later her first Parliament met and at once proceeded to repeal the laws concerning religion passed under her predecessor and to declare the Queen legitimate. The new Speaker was Sir John Pollard, the second son of Walter Pollard, of Plymouth, by Avice, daughter of Richard Pollard of Way, Co. Devon. Parliament was dissolved early in December, after requesting the Queen to marry, and suggesting that she should choose her husband from amongst the English nobility, for the possibility of union with Philip of Spain was strongly resented. Mary returned a diplomatic answer, denying the right of the House to influence her choice, but declaring that her sole wish was to secure her

people's happiness as well as her own. Immediately afterwards she entered upon the final negotiations for her marriage to Philip.

Pollard was re-elected Speaker in October, 1555, and during the session an Act was passed to restore some at least of the Church property alienated by Henry VIII. It was only carried in the Lower House by 193 to 126, but in the Lords only two peers voted against it. Machyn records the burial of Sir John Pollard on 25 August, 1557, but he omits to mention the place of interment. Sir Robert Brooke was Speaker of Mary's second Parliament, summoned to ratify the Queen's contract of marriage. Of a Shropshire family, he was the first Speaker to sit for the City of London. He died in 1558, and in the chancel of Claverley Church near Wolverhampton a stately monument to his memory was erected. Sir Clement Heigham, an intimate friend of the Queen, was Speaker of her third Parliament (the first of Philip and Mary). It was opened in great state by Mary and her consort in person, who rode on horseback from Whitehall to Westminster. Two days later, his attainder having been reversed, Cardinal Pole arrived at Westminster in his state barge, bearing the Legatine emblem of a silver cross at the prow. Between the dissolution of this Parliament and the end of the reign three hundred heretics were burnt at Smithfield and other places.

Much the same precautions were taken to secure the return of members acceptable to the Court as had been taken by Henry VIII. The sheriffs were enjoined only to return such as were resident in the constituencies, a regulation well worthy of imitation at the present day, and " men given to good order, Catholic, and discreet."

SIR WILLIAM CORDELL
1557-8
From a portrait at St. John's College, Oxford

In the year in which Calais was lost, Queen Mary, sick at heart at Philip's desertion, met her last Parliament. She opened it in person after attending Mass in the Abbey. Sir William Cordell, of Long Melford, Suffolk, member for the county, was chosen Speaker. The session was not in any way remarkable, and, after granting a subsidy, the Houses were prorogued from March till November. The Commons on their reassembly were about to consider a Bill for the limitation of the powers of the Press, a new subject to engage the attention of the legislature, when the Queen's fatal illness brought the sittings to an abrupt termination. Cordell became Master of the Rolls, and held that lucrative office for nearly a quarter of a century. From that time forward the Speakership came to be regarded by ambitious lawyers as a stepping-stone to high legal preferment. The spacious days of Queen Elizabeth saw ten Parliaments and eleven Speakers; all of them without exception were lawyers.[1]

The tenure of the Chair, even for a single session, served as a bridge to higher legal honours. Nor is the reason far to seek. Whilst the majority were men in good practice at the Bar, the emoluments of the Chair at the close of the sixteenth century were so small that the natural trend of their ambition was towards the better-paid offices of the profession. Including the great Sir Thomas More, five Speakers have risen to the Woolsack either as Chancellor or Keeper of the Great Seal: Audley, Rich, Puckering, and Heneage Finch, whilst Hare, Lenthall, and Whitelocke were Commissioners during vacancy. Seven became Masters of the Rolls: Hare, Cordell, Phelips, Lenthall, Grimston, Trevor, and Powle. More numerous still have

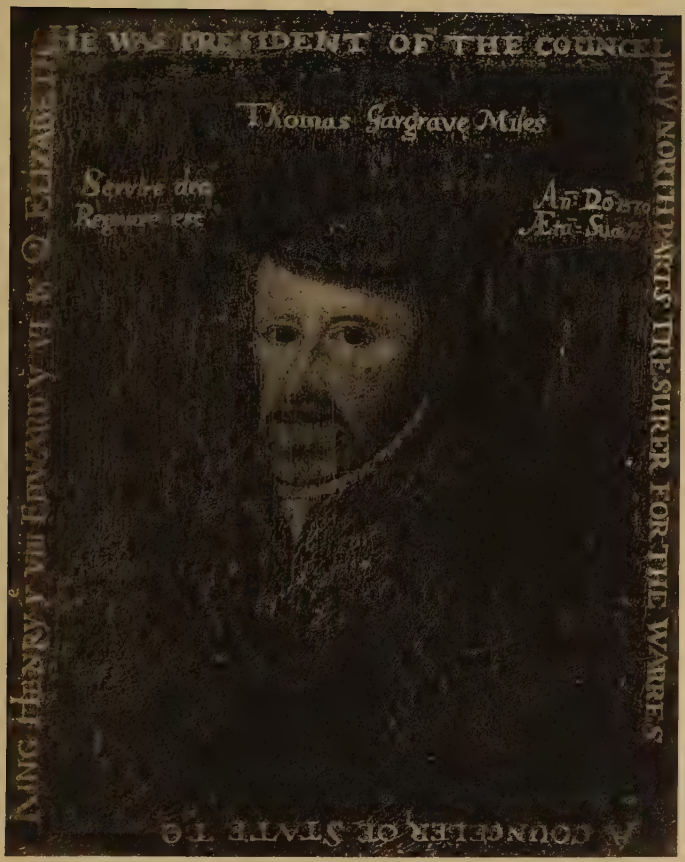
[1] The same was the case in the two succeeding reigns.

been the instances in which the post of Chief Justice of the King's Bench or the Common Pleas has been conferred on a former Speaker. Sir James Dyer, Sir Robert Brooke, Sir Christopher Wray, Sir John Popham, Sir Edward Coke, Sir John Croke, Sir Randolph Crewe, Sir Thomas Richardson, and Sir Job Charlton filled one or other of these coveted places, whilst Barons of the Exchequer and Recorders of London are to be found in plenty in the catalogue. For 170 years the Speakership was farmed by the Law, and that during the least glorious period of its history. When Sir John Trevor was expelled the House in 1695 for taking bribes he was allowed to remain Master of the Rolls.

So many Speakers had lived in Chancery Lane that in the seventeenth century the Rolls House came to be looked upon as the official residence of the presiding officer of the Commons sooner or later in his career. This house, which was pulled down to make way for an extension of the Public Record Office, was designed by Colin Campbell in the reign of George I to replace an earlier structure on the same site. It was a comfortable, rambling building large enough to accommodate a big family. A good story is told of Sir William Grant in connection with it. When his successor arrived, the great Judge personally conducted him over the ground floor. "Here are two or three good rooms: this is my sitting-room; my library and bedroom are beyond; and I am told there are some good rooms upstairs, but I never was there myself."

The illegal system of State monopolies,[1] which originated

[1] A monopoly conferred the right of selling articles at a higher price than could have been obtained under a system of competition.


HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
Thomas Gargrave Miles
Anno Do 1570
Ætatis Sue
HENRY NORTHUMBERLAND TREASURER FOR THE WARRES
A COUNCELER OF STATE TO
KING HENRY VIII EDWARD VI & QUEEN ELIZABETH

SIR THOMAS GARGRAVE
1558-59
From a painting in the possession of Milner Gibson Gery Cullum, Esq.

under the Tudors, was perpetuated and extended by the Stuarts. These encroachments on the liberty of the subject provided a convenient means of raising money without the consent of Parliament, and tended, as much as anything, to produce that rooted antagonism to the misuse of the royal prerogative which characterised the House of Commons in the first half of the seventeenth century. The valuable collections of Sir Symonds D'Ewes, supplemented by the Registers of the Privy Council, throw a lurid light on the proceedings of Parliament in the reign of Elizabeth.

As a rule, the Speaker was elected by the unanimous vote of the House, but the appointment of Richard Onslow is an early instance, perhaps the earliest, of a contested election to the Chair. On 1 October, 1566, he was chosen by eighty-two votes to sixty, and though he pleaded as an excuse for serving the necessity of his attendance in the House of Lords as Solicitor-General, the House decided that he might fill the two offices concurrently. Onslow, the first of three Speakers of his name and family, married Katherine Hardinge in 1559, whose father lived at Knowle, Cranley, Surrey, and from him the Earls of Onslow are descended.

His brother Fulk was Clerk of the House at the time of Richard's election, and in that capacity it fell to his lot to record the result of the division. Richard Onslow's town house was in Blackfriars, so that he was doubtless in the habit of proceeding to Westminster in his state barge, as the roads leading to the House were still unsuited to the passage of a heavy coach in bad weather.

An interesting account of the arrangement of the House of Commons as Richard Onslow knew it was prepared in

1568 by Hooker, a well-known antiquarian writer of the day, for the use of the then Speaker of the Irish Parliament. "The Lower House, as it is called, is a place distinct from the other: it is more of length than of breadth; it is made like a theatre, having four rows of seats one above another round about the same. At the higher end, in the middle of the lower row, is a seat made for the Speaker, in which he always sitteth; before it is a table board, at which sitteth the Clerk of the House, and thereupon layeth his books, and writeth his records. Upon the lower row, on both sides the Speaker, sit such personages as be of the King's Privy Council, or of his chief officers; [1] but as for any other, none claimeth nor can claim any place, but sitteth as he cometh, saving that on the right hand of the Speaker, next beneath the said counsels, the Londoners and the citizens of York do sit, and so in order should sit all the citizens accordingly; without this House is one other, in which the under clerks do sit, as also such as be suitors and attendant to that House. And whensoever the House is divided upon any Bill, then the room is voided, and the one part of the House cometh down into this place to be numbered." Here is indicated the origin of the outer lobby, and the primitive manner of taking divisions under the Tudors.

St. Stephen's Chapel, in addition to its still-existing crypt, had also an attic storey in which were kept the manuscript records of Parliament. A great clearance of these was made in the time of the Commonwealth, when Scobell, the then Clerk of the House, was found to have carried many of them away to his own house.

[1] An early mention of the front Government and Opposition benches.

THOMAS WILLIAMS
1562-3
From a memorial brass at Harford Church, Devon

SIR CHRISTOPHER WRAY
1571
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

Richard Onslow died of a pestilent fever in 1571, and was buried at St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury, where a monument with the effigies of himself and his wife was erected. Sir Robert Bell, a Norfolk gentleman, who was Speaker from 1572 to 1575–76, met with a somewhat similar end. Having been made Chief Baron of the Exchequer, in succession to Sir Edward Saunders, he died, at the Oxford summer assizes, of gaol fever, contracted whilst presiding at the trial of a bookseller for slandering the Queen.

Of Sir John Popham, Speaker from 1580–81 to 1583, the first Balliol man to fill the Chair, a witty saying is recorded by Bacon. The Commons had sat a long time without achieving much in the way of legislation, and when the Queen asked him: "What hath passed in the House, Mr. Speaker?" he made answer: "May it please Your Majesty, seven weeks!" He acted as Prosecutor for the Crown at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots, and only in this present year, 1910, the original document signed by Elizabeth prescribing the payment of £100 as "blood money" for his services on that occasion was sold by auction in London.

In his oration on his elevation to the Chair, Popham advised his fellow-members "to use reverent and discreet speeches, to leave curiosity of form, and to speak to the matter." Further, as the Parliament was likely to be a short one, to avoid superfluous argument.

Increased respect was now beginning to be paid to the Chair, and a motion was made by the Comptroller of the Household and universally approved by which the residue of the House "of the better sort of calling"

were enjoined, at the conclusion of each day's sitting, "to depart and come forth in comely and civil sort," curtseying to the Speaker on leaving, and not thrusting and thronging "as of late time hath been disorderly used." Members were further required to keep their servants, pages, and lacqueys attending on them in good order.[1]

In the course of the same session D'Ewes makes mention of a concession by the House at large to the Serjeant-at-Arms, who was infirm, but without specifying the occasion. "The House being moved did grant that the Serjeant, who was to go before the Speaker, being weak and somewhat pained in his limbs, might ride upon a foot-cloth nag." Although he appears to have ruled the House wisely, Popham's attitude in the Chair was occasionally unfavourably commented upon, a Mr. Cope complaining, on one occasion, that Mr. Speaker "in some such matters as he hath favoured, but without licence of this House, hath spoken to a Bill, and in some other cases which he did not favour and like of, he would prejudice the speeches of other members."

Probably a descendant of the Popham who was Speaker in 1449, his legal knowledge is embodied in his well-known volume of "Reports and Cases." His portrait, by an unknown artist, in the National Portrait Gallery, represents him as a benevolent-looking old man of sixty-eight.

Sir John Puckering, Speaker from 1584–86, and again from 1586–87, is not mentioned in the official Commons Journals (which indeed contain no record of the proceedings of any of the later Parliaments of Elizabeth), but

[1] D'Ewes, *Journals of Elizabeth*, 1682 edition, p. 282.

RICHARD ONSLOW
1566
From a painting in the Speaker's House

SIR ROBERT BELL
1572
From a print

deserves more than passing notice here. When he was voted to the Chair for the second time Parliament had been especially convened to consider the verdict in the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots. Elizabeth sent an order to the Commons by her Vice-Chamberlain[1] requiring that no laws should be made in the course of the session, "there being many more already than could be well executed." A compliant House was only too willing to endorse the views of the advisers of the Crown, and after the preliminaries of meeting had been disposed of, Puckering put the House in remembrance of its duty to deal forthwith with what he hypocritically described as "The Great Cause," recommended to its consideration by the Queen. In the debate which followed, Francis Bacon made his maiden speech and the Speaker was unanimously directed to wait upon Elizabeth and to urge her to comply with the findings of the House against her prisoner.

The Queen received Puckering in audience at Richmond,[2] when he submitted a petition calling for Mary's speedy execution, using many "excellent and solid reasons," in a memorial written with his own hand, why her life should be taken. Of these reasons the one which weighed most with Elizabeth was that which declared that Mary was "greedy for her death," and preferred it before her own life or safety. The House adjourned over Christmas, and before it could meet again[3] the last act in the long-drawn tragedy of Fotheringay had taken place. In after days Puckering was rewarded for his complaisant servility by being made Keeper of the Great Seal. In the Upper House he

[1] Sir Christopher Hatton. [2] 13 November.
[3] On 15 February.

deserted the Commons' cause when in his reply to Coke's demand for the ancient privileges of the House he replied in overbearing terms, " Your right of free speech is not to say anything that pleaseth you and come out with whatsoever may be your thought. Your right of free speech is the right of Aye or No."

Puckering lived at Kew, where he entertained the Queen, who was graciously pleased to take away a knife and fork as a memento of her visit. When in town he lived at Russell House, near Ivy Bridge, on the south side of the Strand. The Hotel Cecil now covers the site. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, the second in the long catalogue of Speakers to be so honoured. A ponderous monument, erected by his widow in the Chapel of St. Paul, with effigies of both husband and wife, may still be seen.

Rather less than justice has been done by Parliamentary historians to Serjeant Thomas Snagge, who was Speaker in 1588–89, in the Parliament summoned by Elizabeth, after the defeat of the Armada, to place the country in a state of security in the event of a renewal of Spanish aggression. Coming as he did after Puckering, who became Keeper of the Great Seal, and immediately before Coke, whose effulgence overshadowed his more modest attainments, Snagge, though he never reached the judicial bench, seems to have been an excellent public servant and a man in advance of his time in advocating the simplification of legal phraseology in the drafting of Acts of Parliament. Though a staunch supporter of the royal prerogative, he was less subservient to the Court than the majority of his predecessors, which may account for his having been passed over,

SIR JOHN POPHAM
1580-1
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

F. Cole, sculpt.

SIR JOHN PUCKERING
1584, 1586
From his tomb in Westminster Abbey
From a print

whilst less scrupulous members of his profession were raised to hereditary honours. His speech to the throne, on presentation as Speaker for the royal approval, compares very favourably with the bombastic language employed by Coke on a similar occasion.

The son of Thomas Snagge, of Letchworth—the "garden city" of the twentieth century—a gentleman bearing arms at the Heralds' Visitation of Hertfordshire in 1572, he acquired a large landed estate by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Thomas Decons, of Marston-Morteyne, in the county of Bedford, and became a wealthy man independently of his professional emoluments. He was bred to the law at Gray's Inn, where he formed the acquaintance of Walsingham, and the first mention to be found of his Parliamentary services is on 7 April, 1571, when he was appointed to serve on a Committee which met in the Star Chamber to consider the subsidy to be granted to the Queen. At this time he sat for Bedfordshire, though at the time of his promotion to the Chair he represented the borough, while his eldest son, also Thomas Snagge, sat for the county. His brother, Robert Snagge, had also been a member of the House in 1571.

In the course of the session he made speeches advocating the use of simpler language in the making of laws, "whereby all entrapments should be shunned and avoided," an enlightened view, coming from the source which it did. He also spoke at some length on the difficult question of Simony.[1] Probably through Walsingham's influence he was made Attorney-General for Ireland in 1577. The Lord Deputy, Henry Sidney, had written to the

[1] D'Ewes, *Journals of Elizabeth*, pp. 163 and 165.

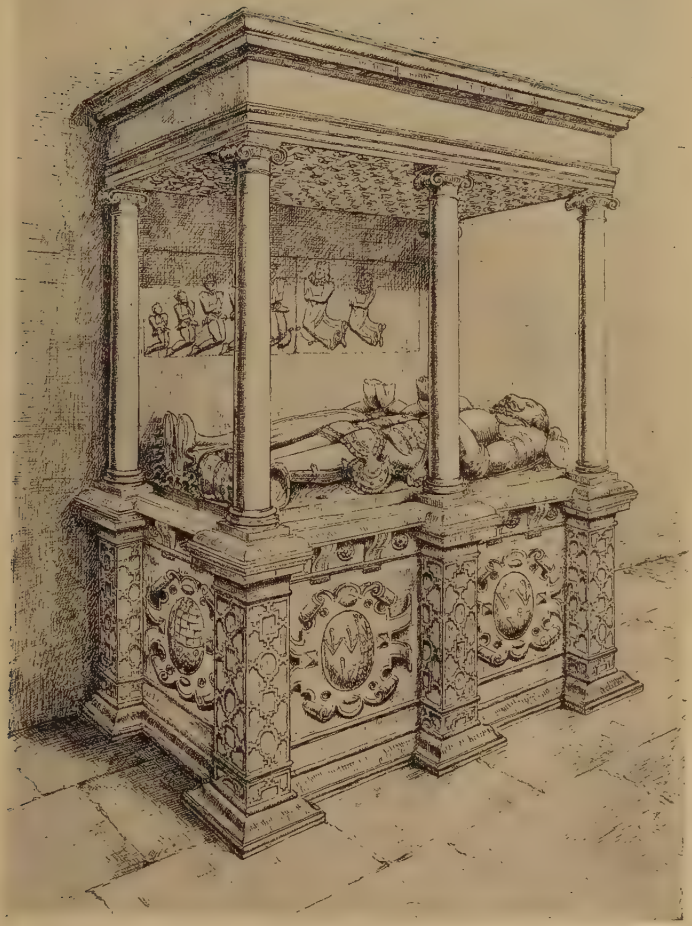
Privy Council in England to say that there were no lawyers in that country capable of filling the post, with the exception of Sir Lucas Dillon, the Chief Baron.

The Queen's choice fell upon Thomas Snagge, and in a letter, dated from Oatlands in September, 1577, she wrote that she was "sufficiently persuaded of his learning and judgment," and that he was to have £100 a year in addition to his fees, and the wages of two horsemen and three footmen. Moreover, "forasmuch as for an infirmity taken by an extreme cold he hath once in the year used his body to the baynes in England, the continuance whereof was requisite to his health," he was to be at liberty to repair to Bath once a year for six weeks "at such time of vacation as may best agree with his cure and be least hindrance to the public service."

In sending Snagge's Patent of Appointment to Sidney, Walsingham wrote as follows: "The Dutye that he oweth to Her Majestie and his Countrye doth make him leave all other Respects and willinglie to dedicate himself to that Service, for the which I find him a Man so chosen both for Judgement and bould Spirit . . . as hardly all the Howses of Court could yield his like."[1]

Snagge's first letter to Walsingham is dated from Holyhead, to which he had been driven back by stress of weather. In it he mentions that his journey had already cost him forty-eight pounds, and he feared that it would cost him eight pounds more. But on 7 November he wrote from Dublin, saying that "he had seen what there is to be seen concerning the course of law in Ireland, which I find to be but a bare shadowe of Westminster Hall." A little later he is found com-

[1] Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State*, i. 228.



SPEAKER SNAGGE'S MONUMENT
1588-9
At Marston-Morteyne, Beds.
From a drawing

plaining of the conduct of the Master of the Rolls in Ireland, whom he found to be "very negligent in his office, which greatly hindereth Her Majesty. I can get nothing of him but fayre words, and he hath not delivered into the Exchequer these 3 yeares past any estreates for things which passed the seale." He also told Walsingham that the same official would, in his opinion, "do more hurt in this Commonwealth than all the rest of the counseyle can do good."

The Lord Deputy, who was then engaged in the congenial task of crushing Desmond's rebellion, appears to have thought highly of Snagge's capacity, and he wrote to the Privy Council from Dublin Castle:[1] "I find him a man well learned, sufficient stoute and well-spoken, an instrument of good service for Her Majesty, and such as is carefull to redresse by wisdome and good discretion such errors as he findeth in H.M.'s courts here, so that by his presence I find myself well assisted, and I humbly thank your Lordships for the sending of him unto me," adding, significantly enough, that more of his sort were then needed in Ireland.

In 1578 Snagge was still complaining of the disservice done to the Queen's Government by the inefficiency of the officials of Dublin Castle, and the Chief Remembrancer in particular, whose office he described as being the key of all the services touching the revenue, "the wrong turning whereof hath greatly hindered the good I would have done in my service, and, to be plain, if the place is not filled with a special man it is in vain to send over any in my place to serve here." On his return to England Snagge was rewarded by being

[1] On November 26, 1577.

made one of Her Majesty's Serjeants-at-Law, and resumed his attendance in Parliament. Nor were Walsingham and Sidney the only ministers of the Crown whose confidence he enjoyed.

Lord Treasurer Burghley, another celebrity hailing from Gray's Inn in its most glorious days, signed himself "Your loving friend" in a letter which he addressed to the Speaker shortly after his elevation to the Chair. This document, which is preserved in the Public Record Office, is reproduced in facsimile on the adjoining page, and deserves to be inserted here, as it contains an early allusion to the state of public business in the House of Commons, and reveals the anxiety of the Government of the day to secure the passage of the measures referred to in an accompanying schedule :—

"Mr. Speaker,

"I praie you consider of this note which I had of my Lord Chancellor,[1] and to cause the Clerk of the Lower House to sett down how theie stande at this daie in their Readinge, etc.

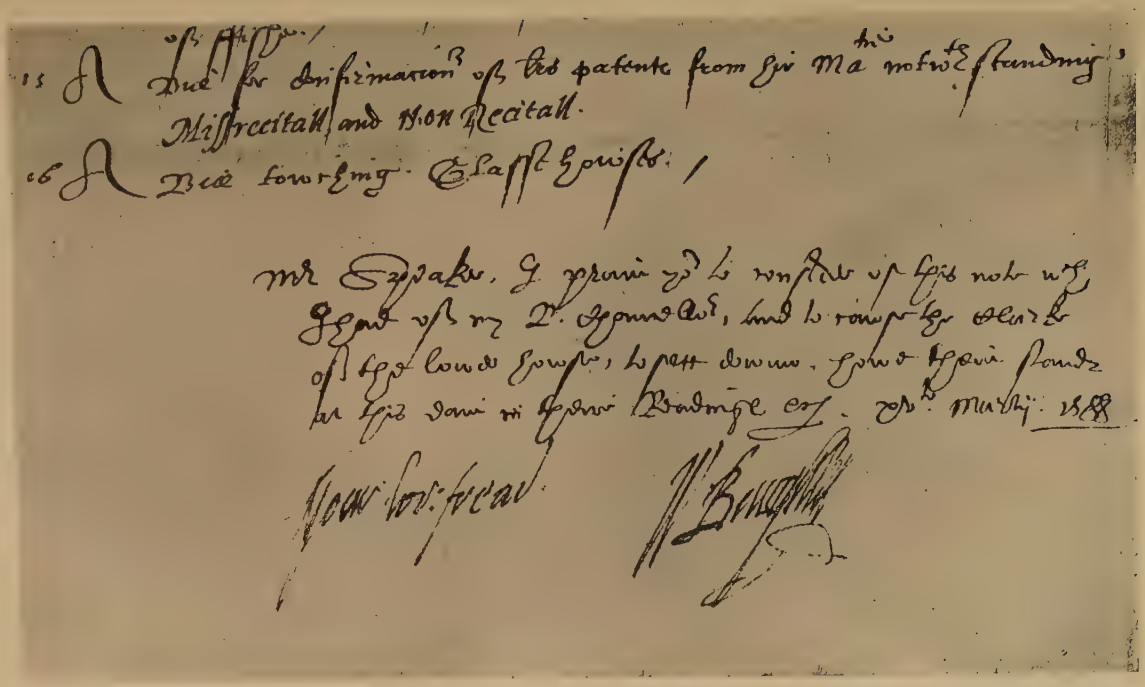
"Your loving friend,

"W. Burghley, xv Martii, 1588–[89]."

Fulk Onslow, brother of the Speaker of 1566, was the person referred to by the Lord Treasurer.

Speaker Snagge died in 1593, and was buried in a sumptuous alabaster tomb at Marston-Morteyne adorned with the recumbent effigies of himself and his wife. Manning, writing in 1851, erroneously supposed that the male line of the family was extinct ; but the present Sir Thomas Snagge, Judge of County Courts, is the

[1] Sir Christopher Hatton.



LETTER FROM LORD BURGHLEY TO SPEAKER SNAGGE, 1588-89

representative head of this ancient family and tenth in descent from the Speaker of 1588–89.[1]

Sir Edward Coke, like Sir Thomas More, now crossed the stage of Parliament. He was Speaker for less than two months, and it was not until the evening of his days, and after he had been out of the House for twenty-seven years, that he re-entered it, as an independent member, to become the foremost champion of the liberties of the subject. His Parliamentary fame therefore belongs rather to the Stuart period and will be treated of in the next chapter. What little is known of Coke's attitude in the Chair during the few weeks in which he was Speaker is mainly due to the collections of the indefatigable Sir Symonds D'Ewes. His speech (or speeches, for he made two), on presentation for the royal approval, differed in no material degree from the language of extravagant metaphor employed by most of his predecessors, and showed little of the independence and courage which marked the later years of his career. Although anxious to pose as the faithful servant of the House, he seems to have misconceived the true function of the Speaker's office, and never to have been able to forget that he was also the Queen's Solicitor-General. Likening himself with mock humility to untimely fruit "not yet ripe, but a bud scarcely blossomed," [2] he expressed the fear that Her Majesty "amongst so many fair fruit had plucked in him a shaking leaf."

The Lord Keeper, Puckering, answered him in similar

[1] The illustration of Speaker's Snagge's monument was kindly supplied to the author, together with much interesting genealogical information, by Sir Thomas Snagge, from a drawing by G. Wilson, of Messrs. Farmer and Brindley, Lambeth.

[2] Coke was now in his forty-second year.

strain, and in his second oration, the new Speaker, after a complimentary reference to Elizabeth's late successes over her enemies the Pope and the King of Spain, passed in rapid review the legislative achievements of every reign since that of Henry III. But, as Coke was notoriously careless in verifying his references, even his great and acknowledged erudition could hardly have prevented him from making many mistakes in attempting such an epitome of Parliamentary history. He also spoke of there being already so many laws that they might properly be termed *Elephantinæ Leges*, saying that to make more would seem superfluous were it not that the malice of "our arch-enemy the Devil" required the passing of measures designed to counteract his evil influence. He concluded with the usual formal requests for liberty of speech, freedom from arrest, and access to the Sovereign. To which Puckering, an even greater sycophant, having received fresh instructions from the Queen, made the singular reply already mentioned[1] in which he defined his latest interpretation of the right of free speech.

Two days later Coke was suddenly taken ill and could not attend the sittings of the House. "On Saturday 24 February the House being set, and a great number of the members of the same assembled, Mr. Speaker not then as yet being come to the House, some said to one another, they heard he was sick; and one affirmed it to be so indeed, showing that he had been with him this morning himself, and left him sick in his bed,[2] and his physician and his wife with him; and some others

[1] At page 142 of this volume.

[2] At his house in Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, for he did not remove to Holborn until his second marriage.

SIR EDWARD COKE
1592-3
From a painting at Holkham

supposing that he would shortly signify unto this House the cause of that his absence, moved that the Clerk [1] might in the meantime proceed to saying of the Litany and Prayers. Which being so done accordingly the Serjeant of this House, presently after the said prayers finished, brought word from Mr. Speaker unto the Rt. Hon. Sir John Woolley, Kt., one of H.M.'s most honourable Privy Council, and a member of this House and then present, that he had been this last night and also was this present forenoon so extremely pained with a wind in his stomach and looseness of body, that he could not as yet without his further great peril and danger adventure into the air at this time, which otherwise most willingly he would have done." Whereon : " all the said members of this House being very sorry for Mr. Speaker, his sickness, rested well satisfied. And so the House did rise, and every man departed away." [2]

His recovery must have been as rapid as his indisposition was sudden. On the 27th of the same month, when he returned to the Chair, he dealt a blow against the advocates of complete religious liberty by ensuring the postponement of an inconvenient debate which had been sprung upon the House in connection with the abuses prevailing in the Ecclesiastical Courts. An unequal contest was in progress between the Crown and a numerous section of the House which sought to prevent the Bishops and Ecclesiastical Judges from applying the penal laws originally directed against the Papists to the Puritan Clergy. The subtlety which he had acquired in the practice of the law enabled Coke,

[1] Fulk Onslow.

[2] Sir Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals of Queen Elizabeth's Reign*, p. 470.

knowing as he did the Queen's wishes, so to utilise and amplify the forms of the House as to serve what he conceived to be the royal interests without, at the same time, alienating from himself the confidence of the assembly over which he presided.

A Mr. Morris, Attorney of the Court of Wards, brought forward a Bill to protect the Puritans from harsh ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and its reception by the House was not unfavourable. Sir Francis Knollys, the Treasurer of the Household, and Oliver St. John [1] supported it, whilst Sir Robert Cecil [2] and Doctor William Lewin, M.P. for Rochester and a judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, inveighed against it. Coke, who owed much of his early advancement to the Cecil family and to Lord Burghley in particular, dexterously prevented the House from coming to an immediate decision, by stating that the Bill was too complex for him to comprehend its full meaning on such short notice, and by asking leave to consider its provisions in private on the understanding that he would keep them secret. The Bill was accordingly left in his hands for perusal. But the House at large had not foreseen the dangers of procrastination so adroitly recommended to it by an expert in the manipulation of precedent. The Queen forthwith sent for the Speaker to St. James's Palace and commanded him to deliver a message to the Body of the Realm, as she was pleased to describe the House of Commons, peremptorily forbidding its Members

[1] Afterwards first Viscount Grandison and Lord High Treasurer of Ireland in 1625.

[2] Raised to the Peerage in the next reign as Viscount Cranborne and Earl of Salisbury, the well-known builder of Hatfield House.

to meddle in matters of State policy or in ecclesiastical causes.

That the Coke of 1593 was a wholly different man from the fearless champion of liberty which his many admirers assert that he became after his final estrangement from the atmosphere of the Court, is apparent from the speech which he made to the House in commendation of the royal message. In it he stands revealed as the docile servant of the Crown, whilst endeavouring, with scant success, to justify himself to the House for having disclosed the contents of the Bill to the Queen.

"I must be short, for Her Majesty's words were not many, and I may, perhaps, fail in the delivery of them. For though my auditors be great, yet who is so impudent whom the presence of such a Majesty could not appal? Her Majesty did not require the Bill of me, this only she required of me, what were the things in the Bill spoken of by the House? Which points I only delivered as they that heard me can tell. . . . Her Majesty's express commandment is that no Bill touching the said matters of State or Reformation in causes ecclesiastical be exhibited. And, upon my allegiance, I am commanded, if any such Bill be exhibited, not to read it."

Not only was the Bill quashed, but Mr. Morris, the unfortunate sponsor of it, was sent for to the Court, and committed to the custody of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1] Later in the same session there was a serious disagreement, perhaps the most remarkable since 1407, between the two Houses as to the amount of the subsidy to be granted to the Crown, and the means to be taken to expedite it. In a periodically

[1] Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 889.

recurring controversy, wherein, thirty-five years later, Coke was destined to play the foremost part in determining the questions at issue in favour of the representative Chamber, the Speaker acted once more as the instrument of the Sovereign rather than as the jealous protector of the privileges of the Commons. An animated and, from the constitutional point of view, a highly instructive debate continued for several days, touching the right of the Lords to intervene in the matter of finance. On 1 March their Lordships sent down a message to the Commons requiring them to expedite the passing of an increased supply and desiring a conference on the subject.

The great Sir Francis Bacon, Coke's lifelong rival, was foremost in opposing the adoption of such a course, declaring that it was contrary to the privileges of the Commons to join with the Lords in the granting of a subsidy : " For the custom and privilege of this House hath always been," he said, " first to make offer of the subsidies from hence, then to the Upper House. . . . And reason it is, that we should stand upon our privilege, seeing the burthen resteth upon us as the greatest number, nor is it reason the thanks should be theirs. And in joining with them in this motion, we shall derogate from ours ; for the thanks will be theirs and the blame ours, they being the first movers. Wherefore I wish that in this action we should proceed, as heretofore we have done, apart by ourselves, and not join with their Lordships." He argued further that though the Lords might give notice to the Commons what need or danger there was, they ought not to prescribe the sum to be given. It will be noted that he based his argument for the supremacy of the Commons in finance,

not upon their representative character, but upon their numerical superiority. Sir Walter Raleigh spoke in favour of an increased subsidy without alluding to the constitutional aspect of the question, but Robert Beale, the representative of the Borough of Lostwithiel, an old member of the House and a well-known diplomatist and antiquarian writer, vehemently insisted on the preservation and maintenance of the ancient liberties of the House, citing the inevitable precedent of the reign of Henry IV, in the Parliament held at Gloucester in 1407, whereat it was asserted that a conference between the two Houses in the sphere of finance would be a derogation of the privileges of the representatives of the people.[1]

Sir Robert Cecil used his great influence in favour of holding the conference, but on a division being taken only 128 voted for it and 217 against it. But the matter was not even then finally disposed of. A message was sent to the Lords to acquaint them that the Commons could not join with them in cases of benevolence or contribution, but, on a later day, Mr. Beale, who seems to have been but a pinchbeck Hampden after all, receded from his former uncompromising attitude, and humbly asked leave of the House to make a personal explanation. This was to the effect that he had mistaken the precise significance of the question already put from the Chair and decided by the House, and that he now thought that if the Lords desired a conference it ought to be accorded.

"Mr. Beale desired to satisfy the House, by reason it was conceived by the Lords the other day, that upon his

[1] For his share in the dispute and his attitude towards the malpractices of the Ecclesiastical Courts referred to above, Beale was banished from Court and Parliament.

motion, and by his precedent showed, the House was led to deny a conference with the Lords, acknowledged he had mistaken the question propounded. For there being but a conference desired by the Lords, and no confirming of any thing they had done, he thought we might, and it was fit we should confer. And to this end only he showed the Precedent. That in the ninth year of Henry IV the Commons having granted a subsidy, which the Lords thought too little, and they agreed to a greater and would have the Commons to confirm that which they had done; this the Commons thought they could not do without prejudice to this House. Wherefore he acknowledged himself mistaken in the question, and desired if any were led by him, to be satisfied, for that he would have been of another opinion if he had conceived the matter as it was meant."[1]

Sir Walter Raleigh, quick to see the advantage to be gained through this change of front, then proposed and carried, without a dissentient voice, a motion for a general conference with the Lords, " touching the great imminent dangers of the Realm and State, and the present necessary supply of Treasure to be provided speedily for the same according to the proportion of the necessity."

At these Conferences the Lords sat covered whilst the members of the Lower House stood uncovered. This curious Parliamentary survival lingered well into the nineteenth century, and the late Mr. Evelyn Philip Shirley, of Ettington, who died so recently as 1882, not only remembered the observance of this custom, but to have seen the carpet spread, not on the floor of the Conference room, but on the table. This usage is believed to have given rise to the phrase " on the tapis."

[1] D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 487.

Macaulay attended one of these Conferences,[1] and made an interesting comment on the relations of the Lords and Commons in this connection.

"The two Houses had a conference on the subject in an old Gothic room called the Painted Chamber. The painting consists in a mildewed daub of a woman in the niche of one of the windows. The Lords sat in little cocked hats along a table, and we stood uncovered on the other side, and delivered in our Resolutions. I thought that before long it may be our turn to sit, and theirs to stand." [2]

The last time the Painted Chamber was ever used was on 13 August, 1834, when a Conference between the two Houses was held in it on the County Coroners Bill. In October of the same year it was destroyed by fire.

The Conference of 1593 was held in due course in the "chamber next to the Upper House of Parliament," and from that moment victory rested with the Lords. For, notwithstanding a sharp wrangle as to the wording of the preamble of the Bill of Supply, it was drawn up and finally assented to in the following terms: "We the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons of this present Parliament assembled, do by our like assent, and authority of this Parliament, give and grant to your Highness," etc. etc. Thus, in 1593, the Commons yielded to the Lords the very point which Coke, when the question of the wording of the preamble of Bills of Supply came up for settlement in 1628, was foremost in insisting upon, namely, the right of the Commons to be exclusively named in the granting of supplies.

[1] On Indian Resolutions, June 17, 1833.

[2] Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, Vol. I, p. 302.

Sir Symonds D'Ewes, whose collections are especially valuable for this period, further states that the Bill of 1593 was only passed with much difficulty, and after many days' agitation, "by reason of the greatness thereof," owing to the Speaker "*over-reaching the House in the subtle putting of the question*, by which means it had only been considered of in the Committee Chamber by eighteen members of the House appointed in the beginning of this forenoon,[1] though many of the House desired a longer time for it to have been considered in Committee." It had actually been under consideration on ten separate occasions between 26 February and 22 March, when it passed the third reading.

Some scraps of information concerning the more personal aspect of the House of Commons at this period are to be gleaned from contemporary sources. On the occasion of the great debate on the financial relations of the two Houses, it fell to Coke's lot to reprimand an unfortunate stranger,[2] who had wandered into St. Stephen's Chapel and sat there for the greater part of the morning. He was committed to the custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms and imprisoned for several days. Matthew Jones, "gentleman," was charged with a similar offence on 27 March, and appearing to the House to be a simple ignorant old man, he was pardoned after being admonished by the Speaker.

On another day Coke, perceiving some men to whisper together, said that it was not the manner of the House to talk secretly, for that only public speeches were to be used there.

Purely legal Bills were committed to the Serjeants-

[1] 22 March. [2] John Legge, a servant of the Earl of Northumberland.

at-Law who were members of the House, and were considered not in the precincts of St. Stephen's, but at Serjeant's Inn in Fleet Street, perhaps with the intention of keeping them under the direct surveillance and control of the Speaker, who had his town house there.

Coke regularly asserted his right of speaking and voting in committee, and he appears to have inaugurated a rule whereby the chairman was empowered, in the case of two or more members rising at the same time, to ask on which side they desired to speak, and to give precedence to a member who desired to oppose the arguments of the last speaker. Members who, for any good reason shown, desired leave of absence were required to leave a small sum of money with the Serjeant to be distributed amongst the poor. The amount varied from one shilling to six, but Mr. Wilfrid Lawson, Knight of the Shire for Cumberland, a direct ancestor of the late member for Cockermouth, left town without making the customary donation. In 1593 every member gave a shilling to the Serjeant for his attendance on the House, and for the cost of a clock which he had set up for the general convenience. Every Privy Councillor paid thirty shillings as a charitable contribution to the relief of the poor, every Knight of the Shire, and Serjeant or Doctor of Law twenty shillings, and every burgess five shillings. One poor burgess refused to pay more than half a crown, whereupon Coke would have committed him to the custody of the Serjeant for disobeying the order of the House. But the general sense of the House being against such harsh dealing he escaped.

The legislative harvest of the Session of 1592–93, a remarkable Parliament, owing to its standing nearly

midway between the earliest Plantagenet assemblies and those of modern times, and from its having been presided over by one of the greatest intellects of his own or any age, was not a large one. It comprised only fourteen public and thirteen private Bills. In the former category, apart from the controversial Subsidy Bill, two only were of any consequence. Both of them, according to strict Tudor precedent, originated in the House of Lords, and both were penal measures, one directed against the Puritans and the other to restrain papal recusants to some certain place of abode.

On quitting the Chair, Coke apologised for the unbecoming expressions into which his natural proclivity to violent language had often led him.[1] When Sir Walter Raleigh was being tried for his life in 1603, Coke denounced him from the Bench as: "Traitor, viper and spider of hell"; nor was this the only occasion when "one of the toughest men ever made," as Carlyle described him, so far forgot himself as to descend to vulgar abuse of his political opponents.

In the person of Sir Christopher Yelverton the House once more chose a Northamptonshire man for its Speaker. His family was of Easton Mauduit and is not yet extinct in the county. In excusing himself to the House, Yelverton is reported to have said: "Your Speaker ought to be a man big and comely, stately and well-spoken, his voice great, his carriage majestical, his nature haughty, and his purse plentiful. But contrarily, the stature of

[1] *The Speaker's Chair*, by E. Lummis, 1900, a concise and useful contribution to the literature of the subject, to which the present author hereby acknowledges his frequent indebtedness.

Janssen, pinxt. *R. Dumbarton, sculpt.*

SIR CHRISTOPHER YELVERTON
1597
From a print

my body is small, myself not so well-spoken, my voice low, my carriage of the common fashion, my nature soft and bashful, my purse thin, light, and never plentiful." Previous to the summoning of this Parliament the Privy Council sent out no less than fifty-two cautionary letters to the sheriffs directing them to use their utmost endeavours to procure the election of "men of understanding and knowledge for the particular estate of the places whereunto they ought to be chosen," and to select, "without partiality as sometimes hath been used," fit persons to serve, especially in the boroughs. No doubt the Council, in looking so far ahead, anticipated that by October, when the House was appointed to meet, Essex would have returned in triumph from his expedition against Spain.

Speaker Yelverton composed the prayer still in use in the Commons, and a very beautiful piece of English it is. The usual hour of assembling was then eight o'clock in the morning, and, as now, the day's proceedings were opened with prayer, but so early as 1558 it had been customary for the Clerk of the House to repeat the Litany kneeling, "answered by the whole House on their knees with divers prayers."[1] In 1571 the hour of meeting was as early as seven a.m., and the afternoon sittings of recent times had their forerunners in May of the same year, when, as an experiment, the House was appointed to meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at three o'clock and to sit till five. An instance of a still earlier meeting is on record, for on 28 March, 1641, the House met at six o'clock in the morning. Later in the seventeenth century nine or ten was the usual hour for assembling, and Lord

[1] Sir Symonds D'Ewes, p. 473.

Clarendon spoke of from eight till twelve as the old Parliamentary hours. To Sir Robert Walpole the House owes its Saturday holiday, and to Sir Robert Peel the short sitting on Wednesday, now altered to Friday in each week.

The last of the Elizabethan Speakers was Sir John Croke, Recorder of London, "a very black man by complexion," thus resembling the "black funereal Finches" of a later era. Fulk Onslow, the Clerk of the House, was stricken with ague, and through the Speaker he petitioned the House for one Cadwallader Tydder to be allowed to execute the duties of his office until it should please God to restore him to health. The House, which has always been careful of its officers' interests, and jealous of their privileges, at once granted Onslow's request, and Tydder took the oath of supremacy.

An interesting question of Parliamentary procedure was settled during Croke's tenure of the Chair. On a division in which the Ayes were 105 and the Noes 106 (in the discussion on a Bill for compelling attendance at church), the minority claimed the Speaker's vote to make the numbers even and secure a casting vote in their favour. Sir Walter Raleigh spoke in opposition to this view, and ultimately the House decided that the only vote a Speaker has is a casting vote between equal numbers. This precedent still obtains, and the Speaker has no right to enter the division lobby, except in committees of the whole house, and even this right has not been exercised since Speaker Denison[1] passed through the lobby in wig and gown to record his vote.[2]

[1] Lord Ossington.

[2] When the question of the Speaker's casting vote was debated Secretary Cecil said: "The Speaker hath no voice; and, though I am sorry for it, the Bill is lost, and farewell to it."

SIR JOHN CROKE
1601
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

In an address to the throne Speaker Croke was alluding to the defeat of Essex's insurrection, "by the mighty arm of our dread and sacred Queen," when Elizabeth caught him up, and interposed, "No, by the mighty hand of God, Mr. Speaker." Croke was responsible for the introduction of sundry orders tending to the general convenience of members. They were forbidden to come into the House with spurs, and a similar restriction was sought to be imposed on rapiers.[1] This Speaker was fifth in descent from Nicholas Le Blount, who changed his name to Croke in consequence of his cousin, Sir Thomas Blount, having been engaged in a conspiracy to restore Richard II to the throne.

At a dinner given by the Abbot of Westminster in December, 1399, it was agreed to surprise Henry IV at a tournament to be held at Windsor on the following Twelfth Night. But the plot was revealed within a few hours of its being carried into execution, and Sir Thomas Blount was put to death under circumstances of exceptional barbarity. Having been partially hanged, he was slowly roasted before a blazing fire, his bowels were cut out, and he was then beheaded, exclaiming, shortly before he expired, "Blessed be this day, for I shall die in the service of my sovereign lord, the noble King Richard!"

Their estates having been forfeited to the Crown, the family fled abroad and entered the service of the Duke of Milan. Having acquired fresh wealth in foreign parts, they returned to England after the death of Henry IV, when they could appear in public in safety. They bought lands in Buckinghamshire, and on the

[1] Sir Symonds D'Ewes, p. 623.

marriage of Speaker Croke to the daughter of Sir Michael Blount, of Maple Durham, the name of Blount was altogether omitted by the branch of the family which had previously styled itself Croke, *alias* Blount. The direct line of the Crokes is now extinct, and their property at Studley, in Oxfordshire, where the Speaker's portrait was formerly preserved, has passed into the possession of the Henderson family.

The deep-rooted antagonism of the English people to Spain, which reached its culminating point with the coming of the Armada, resulted in the return to the House of Commons of a permanent Protestant majority, whereas, at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the adherents of the old faith were a preponderating element both in Parliament and in the country. The Parliament of 1571, in which Sir Christopher Wray was Speaker, was in the main a Puritan assembly. It bestowed the authority of the legislature upon the thirty-nine articles drawn up by convocation nearly ten years earlier, but, as it evinced a strong desire to amend the Prayer Book and to impose new penalties upon the Catholics, it was hastily dismissed.

The next House of Commons included many followers of Thomas Cartwright, the chief exponent of Calvinism in England, and when in 1581 the teachings of the Jesuit, Edmund Campion, inflamed the public mind against Rome, no great indignation was shown when the penal laws against the Catholics were revived. Though the fires of Smithfield were not relighted, recourse was once more had to torture, and the rack was again set up in the Tower in order to extract confessions from prisoners as in the darkest days of the Marian persecution.

Notwithstanding the sharp contrasts of Elizabeth's civil and religious legislation and her determination to regard the two Houses as mere instruments of taxation, convened for the express purpose of replenishing the royal purse, a growing spirit of self-reliance manifested itself in the House of Commons towards the close of a reign in which England became great, not so much because of, as in spite of, the popular assembly.

The fact that the responsible ministers of the Crown, Hatton and Cecil amongst the number, now sat in the House of Commons and took part in its debates on equal terms with the general body of members is conclusive proof that the right of argument was beginning to be recognised as an essential feature of a Constitution hitherto mainly controlled by prerogative.[1]

[1] Portraits of Elizabethan Speakers are not numerous. There is one of Sir Thomas Gargrave at Hardwick House, Bury St. Edmunds, the property of Mr. Gery Cullum, who has kindly allowed it to be reproduced in this volume. Of Richard Onslow and Sir John Popham there are likenesses in the Speaker's collection; and of Sir Christopher Wray there are portraits both at Westminister and in the National Portrait Gallery. Sir Edward Coke is also doubly represented, but of Thomas Williams, Sir John Puckering, and Thomas Snagge, no portraits have been traced.

CHAPTER VI

THE STUARTS AND THE LIBERTIES OF THE PEOPLE

Thirty-two Speakers

James I—
- Edward Phelips
- Randolph Crewe
- Thomas Richardson
- Thomas Crewe

Charles I—
- Heneage Finch
- John Finch
- John Glanville
- William Lenthall

Commonwealth—
- Henry Pelham
- Francis Rous
- Thomas Widdrington
- Bulstrode Whitelocke
- Chaloner Chute
- Lislebone Long
- Thomas Bampfylde
- William Say

Charles II—
- Harbottle Grimston
- Edward Turnour
- Job Charlton
- Edward Seymour
- Robert Sawyer
- William Gregory
- William Williams

James II—
- John Trevor

William III—
- Henry Powle
- Paul Foley
- Thomas Littleton
- Robert Harley

Anne—
- John Smith
- Richard Onslow
- William Bromley
- Thomas Hanmer

THE first of the Stuart line was an unkingly pedant who entirely failed to understand the temper of the nation over which he was called upon to rule. The new and aggressive spirit which showed itself in the House of Commons early

in the reign of James I was stimulated by the perverse and persistent egotism of the "wisest fool in Europe"; and boded ill for the Crown in an age which was beginning to value privilege more than prerogative. The efforts, partial and incomplete though they were, which had been made under Elizabeth to bring about some amelioration of the hard lot of the lower classes, to promote education and to relieve the necessities of the poor, were succeeded by a period of retrogression during which Parliamentary progress was first hindered and then rendered impossible.

A plague in London, which carried off 30,000 people, caused the meeting of James's first Parliament to be delayed until March 1603-4. Sir Edward Phelips, a Somersetshire gentleman, was elected Speaker "by general acclamation," after the names of Sir Henry Nevill, Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Edward Hoby, Sir Henry Montagu, and Sir Francis Hastings had been proposed. The last of these was the colleague of Phelips in the representation of the county of Somerset. The English counties were very unequally represented in the new Parliament, for whilst the official returns give the names of 39 members for Cornwall, 34 for Wiltshire and 26 for Hampshire, Lancashire had only 12, Kent 10, Cumberland and Westmorland 4 each, and Northumberland only 2.[1] Speaker Phelips succeeded to the estate of Montacute in 1598, and soon after that date he began to build the

[1] The writs for the Parliament were issued under a Royal Proclamation, which in its terms directly infringed the privileges of the House of Commons. [N.B. Especially the order that the writs should be returned to the Chancery.] It assumed entire control of the elections, and threatened fines and imprisonment if its injunctions were traversed (*History of the English Parliament*, by G. Barnett Smith, 1892, Vol. I. p. 361).

magnificent Renaissance mansion which remains to this day one of the principal architectural glories of the county of Somerset. His portrait here reproduced is by permission of his lineal descendant the present owner of Montacute, where, by the way, are preserved the original minutes of the Gunpowder Plot inquiry.

As was customary at this period, the King's speech abounded in metaphor,[1] nor was Speaker Phelips' reply, in which he expressed the usual formal desire to be excused from executing the office, less free from the extravagantly flowery language then considered appropriate to the occasion. Whilst he spoke of himself as "not tasting of Parnassus' springs, nor of the honey left upon the lips of Pluto and Pindarus by the bees," he defined the duties of the Chair as being: "Managed by the absolute perfection of experience, by the profoundness of literature, and by the fullness and grace of natural gifts, which are the beauty and ornament of arts and actions." Nevertheless, the Speaker of the Gunpowder Plot Parliament deserves to be remembered for his energetic vindication of the privileges of the House of Commons. The important case of Sir Thomas Shirley, wherein the amount of protection afforded by the House to its members was carried a step further than in the well-known instances of Haxey and Strode, was determined in the opening session of James's first Parliament.

The member for Steyning, Sussex, a small borough long consigned to oblivion, had been cast into prison, after his return to, but before the meeting of Parliament, in execution of a private debt. Instead of wasting time in

[1] It occupies more than twelve closely printed double columns in Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*.

SIR EDWARD PHELIPS
1603-4
From a painting at Montacute, Somerset

discussing abstract matters of law, the House focused its attention on the means necessary to secure Shirley's immediate release. The Warden of the Fleet was commanded to deliver up his prisoner, and six members acting as a deputation of the whole body, to be accompanied by the Serjeant and the Mace, were empowered to free him, if need be by force, and to bring him in triumph to Westminster. The Warden of the Fleet, however, proved obdurate, whereupon he was summoned to the Bar and admonished by the Speaker in the following terms: "That, as he did increase his contempt, so the House thought fit to increase his punishment; and that their judgment was that he be committed to the prison called Little Ease, within the Tower."

An ingeniously worded request to the King was sent through the Vice-Chamberlain desiring him to command the contumacious Warden to deliver Shirley "not as petitioned for by the House, but as if himself thought it fit out of his own gracious judgment." It was now the Warden's turn to sue for release from durance vile, and, on his making due submission for his dilatoriness in complying with the original Order of the House, the Speaker pronounced pardon, the Warden, on his knees at the Bar, expressing unfeigned regret for his offence. To legalise the position an Act was hastily passed whereby the privileges of members in cases of arrest were, for the first time, defined. A creditor was authorised to sue for a new execution against any one delivered by virtue of his Parliamentary privilege, and power was taken to discharge from liability those out of whose custody such persons should be released.[1]

[1] I James I, c. 13.

The Journals at this time reveal a growing tendency to make rules for the guidance of the House and its presiding officer. On 26 March, 1604, a Mr. Hext moved "against hissing to the interruption and hindrance of the speech of any man in the House," and the clerk recorded that the motion was "well approved." [1] And on 27 April it was agreed for a rule that "If any doubt arise upon a Bill, the Speaker is to explain, but not sway the House with argument or dispute."

Nor was the lighter side of Parliamentary life wholly unrepresented at this period, for on 3 July, 1604, the Merchant Taylors Company gave a solemn feast to the Speaker and a great number of members of the House of principal rate and quality to the number of one hundred. The King sent a buck and a hogshead of wine, and the Clerk of the House, not to be outdone in generosity, presented the Company with a marchpane representing the Commons in session.

Phelips was taken ill in March, 1607, and, as there was no precedent for choosing a temporary Speaker, a committee was ordered to search the records in order to avoid a Parliamentary deadlock. But, as Phelips resumed the Chair next day, nothing was done to meet the emergency, and though temporary Speakers were occasionally chosen in Commonwealth times, it was not until 1853 that the Chairman of Ways and Means was empowered to act as Deputy Speaker. Under more recent Standing Orders the Speaker may call upon the Chairman to take the Chair at any time. Phelips, who, in the opinion of Sir Julius Cæsar, was the most worthy and judicious Speaker

[1] *Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 152.

MONTACUTE, SOMERSET
Built by Sir Edward Phelips

since Sir John Popham, became Master of the Rolls, and in that capacity occupied the house in Chancery Lane which so many Speakers have inhabited. He opened the indictment of Guy Fawkes, at which the venerable Sir John Popham presided as Lord Chief Justice. Fawkes was executed in Old Palace Yard on 31 January, 1606, and from an old print published at the time some idea can be gathered of its appearance at this date.

The Crewes of Crewe Hall are said, on the authority of Ormerod, to have been a family of established position in Cheshire as early as the thirteenth century, but more discriminating genealogists have preferred to date the fortunes of the family from one John Crewe, a tanner at Nantwich in the sixteenth century. Cases of nepotism may have occurred in connection with the Speaker's office, but to John Crewe of Nantwich belongs the unique honour of having had two sons, Randolph and Thomas, both of whom sat in the Chair of the Commons. Both were bred to the law, Randolph at Lincoln's Inn and Thomas at Gray's. Both took the usual lawyer's road to notoriety by standing for Parliament. Randolph, who bought the estate of Crewe Hall from the heirs of Sir Christopher Hatton in 1608, entered the House of Commons as member for Brackley, Northants, in 1597.[1] On 5 April, 1614, he was chosen Speaker *nemine contradicente*, though there is some doubt as to the constituency he then represented.

The session opened with two separate speeches from

[1] He is called Randal in the official return, but this variation in the spelling of the Christian name has not been uncommon, especially in Cheshire.

the throne, one delivered at Westminster on the opening day, and one, a few days later, in the Banqueting House, Whitehall. The Speaker's reply has not been preserved. Two months later the Houses were dissolved without having passed a single Bill, a precedent in Parliamentary history which earned for this assembly the name of the "Addled Parliament." It is on record that Speaker Crewe's experiences in the Chair "gave him a strong distaste for politics," and well they may have done, for during his tenure of office were heard the first mutterings of the storm which was soon to break over England in the form of Civil War. In 1625 he became Chief Justice of the King's Bench, only to be dismissed a year later by Charles I for refusing to acknowledge the legality of forced loans. Sir Randolph Crewe, after his retirement from public life, lived in Westminster, where, according to Fuller, he was renowned for his hospitality; and dying there in January, 1646, he was buried in a chapel which he built at Barthomley on his Cheshire estate. The present Earl of Crewe is descended from him.

It was some years before James summoned another Parliament, and meanwhile he resorted to the old and discredited system of raising money by means of benevolences, a grievance as old as the days of Richard III, by selling patents for peerages and baronetages, and by the creation of monopolies. Before Crewe's younger brother was preferred to the Chair, Sir Thomas Richardson, the son of a country clergyman in Norfolk, became Speaker in James's third Parliament. In making his formal excuse to the House he "wept outright," an incident which points to his well-known

SIR RANDOLPH CREWE
1614
From a painting in the Speaker's House

tenderness of heart. His refusal, when Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, to allow Felton, the assassin of the Duke of Buckingham, to be subjected to torture, marks an epoch in the annals of the criminal law. Richardson was faced in Parliament by the redoubtable Coke, who, after an interval of twenty-seven years, now re-entered the House as member for Liskeard.

Though Richardson's tenure of the Chair was marked by many events of the highest constitutional importance, he does not seem to have been what is called a strong Speaker. The Parliament over which he presided soon showed itself active against the holders of monopolies. It impeached Sir Giles Mompesson, the chief delinquent in this category; it imprisoned a bishop who was implicated in a charge of bribery; it degraded Lord Chancellor Bacon, who was proved to have accepted money corruptly tendered, if without corrupt motive. And when the hostility between King and Commons, which characterised the entire reign, came to a crisis in December, 1621, the House addressed a Petition and Remonstrance to the King recommending that he should declare war against Spain, and that the Prince[1] "may be timely and happily married to one of our religion." James, in return, directed the Commons to forbear from meddling "with anything concerning our government and mysteries of State," warning them, at the same time, that they derived their ancient liberty of freedom of speech from "the grace and permission of his ancestors and himself."

By the dim candlelight of a winter afternoon,[2] the House forthwith resolved that "The Liberties, franchises,

[1] Charles I. [2] 18 December, 1621.

privileges and jurisdictions of Parliament, are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, State, and the defence of the Realm, and of the Church of England, and the making and maintenance of laws, and redress of mischiefs and grievances, which daily happen within this Realm, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in Parliament; and that in the handling and proceeding of those businesses every member of the House hath, and of right ought to have, Freedom of Speech, to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same; and that the Commons in Parliament have like liberty and freedom to treat of those matters, in such order as in their judgments shall seem fittest; and that every such member of the said House hath like freedom from all Impeachment, Imprisonment, and Molestation (other than by the censure of the House itself), for, or concerning any speaking, reasoning or declaring of any matter or matters, touching the Parliament, or Parliament business: and that, if any of the said members be complained of, and questioned for any thing said or done in Parliament, the same is to be shewed to the King, by the advice and assent of all the Commons assembled in Parliament, before the King give credence to any private information."

On learning of this emphatic pronouncement of its liberties, James dispersed the House by a compulsory adjournment; he sent for the Journal Book and tore the protestation out of it with his own hand.[1] At the same time Coke and Pym were committed to the

[1] *The Manuscript Journals of the House of Commons.* Privately printed by the late Sir Reginald Palgrave, Clerk of the House, 1897.

F. Cole, sculpt.

SIR THOMAS RICHARDSON
1620-21
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

Tower. Reflections were cast upon Richardson from time to time for his conduct in the Chair. It was alleged that he curtailed discussion at a moment opportune for the King, and Sir H. Manners declared that "Mr. Speaker is but a servant to the House, not a master, nor a master's mate," while one Sir W. Herbert bade him "sit still." This much-tried man, who witnessed the earliest rise of the Court and country parties, which, in after years, so sharply divided the House, died at his house in Chancery Lane in 1635. He was accorded the honour, seldom bestowed upon a Speaker, of burial in Westminster Abbey. His monument is still to be seen in the south choir aisle,[1] surmounted by a bronze portrait bust by Le Sueur, the sculptor of King Charles I's statue at Charing Cross.

Sir Thomas Crewe, Sir Randolph's younger brother, was Speaker in James's last Parliament, which met in February, 1623–24, and was dissolved, in consequence of the death of the King, in May, 1625. Elsynge declared that Sir Thomas, on presentation for the royal approval, made the best speech, delivered on a similar occasion, since Speaker Nevill's in the sixth year of Henry VIII, that it did not consist of mere verbal praises but that it was, on the contrary, real and fit for the times. Yet it certainly was not free from the extravagant metaphor indulged in by Phelips and most of the previous Speakers, whose addresses to the Crown have been preserved. Sir Thomas, amongst other oratorical gems, likened himself to a lowly shrub planted amongst many cedars of Lebanon. He went on to express the hope that the King, "like Ahasuerus," would extend to him his sceptre of grace "to sustain him

[1] The *Dictionary of National Biography* says wrongly, "north aisle."

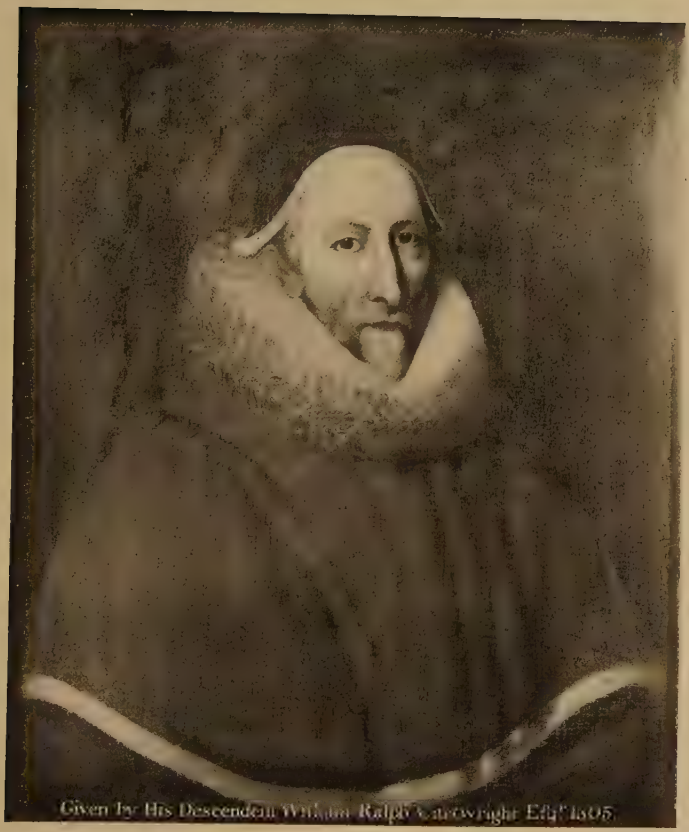
in his fainting." After a passing allusion to the "hellish inventions" of Guy Fawkes, he declared, in the most uncompromising Protestant manner, that it was the wish of every loyal subject of the Crown that the "generation of locusts," the Jesuits and Seminary Priests, who were wont to creep in holes and corners, but who now came openly abroad, might, as with an east wind, be blown away into the sea. He added that though the Pope cursed Queen Elizabeth, God blessed her, and that the ark of true religion would ultimately land James in Heaven, when that "hopeful Prince"[1] would sway the sceptre of England, the while his father wore a celestial crown.[2]

It has been well said that from this time forth the history of England was written at the Clerk's table of the House of Commons. Elsynge, Scobell, and Rushworth are the three best-remembered men who filled the office of Clerk or Clerk-Assistant in the seventeenth century, and the historical collections of the last-named are the most valuable record of the doings of the Long Parliament extant. It is sad to think that this zealous public servant spent the closing years of his life in straitened circumstances in the King's Bench prison in Southwark.

The animated debates on the war with Spain (for which the House voted £300,000); the impeachment of the Earl of Middlesex for bribery, in which Coke took the lead, whilst the prosecution ultimately devolved upon the Speaker's brother acting as Attorney-General; the important concession by the Crown whereby Parliament

[1] Charles I.

[2] *Journals of the House of Lords*, Vol. III, p. 211. When reappointed in the next reign he made a somewhat similar oration, not forgetting his old enemies the Jesuit locusts.



SIR THOMAS CREWE
1623-4, 1625
From a painting in the Speaker's House

won the right of appointing its own Commissioners for the disbursement of supply: all these intricate questions were so tactfully handled by the younger Crewe, that he was once more voted to the Chair when Charles I ascended the throne. He now sat for Gatton, in Surrey, a small borough, as notorious in later times as even Old Sarum. Its political history, prior to the passing of the great Reform Bill, excited Lord Rosebery's scathing ridicule in a recent speech in the House of Lords, though he did not suggest that Gatton was corrupt when a Crewe sat for it.

Charles's first Parliament, holding that the refusal of supplies to the Crown was its most potent weapon against the abuses of prerogative, would only grant a beggarly £140,000, by way of subsidy. It was therefore dissolved after a session of less than three months. To Thomas Crewe succeeded Sir Heneage Finch, son of Sir Moyle Finch, of Eastwell, Kent, and member for the City of London.[1] His brief term of office was marked by an increasing boldness on the part of the Commons, as instanced by the impeachment of Buckingham, the King's prime favourite. It was managed by that trio of patriots, Eliot, Pym, and Dudley Digges.[2] Sir John Eliot, writing in 1625, spoke of the Speakership as being then regarded by the general body of members as "an office frequently filled by nullities, men selected for mere Court convenience," nor was the charge altogether an unjust one.

Eliot came into collision with the Chair when Sir John

[1] Of which he was also Recorder.

[2] Eliot and Digges were arrested, but their imprisonment was held by the Judicature to be a breach of privilege.

Finch, cousin to the Sir Heneage above mentioned, filled the post in the third Parliament of this reign; the first, by the way, in which Oliver Cromwell, then only twenty-nine years of age, had a seat. Sir John Eliot, desiring to raise a question on the subject of tonnage and poundage, Finch, who was a very nervous man, refused to put it on the ground that the King had commanded the House to adjourn. Eliot then read the remonstrance for himself, and on the Speaker rising to adjourn the debate, he was forced back into the Chair by Denzil Holles and some other members, Holles exclaiming: "That by God's wounds he should sit there till it pleased him to rise." [1] The Speaker then burst into tears, saying: "I will not say I will not, but that I dare not." Straightway the House adopted the substance of Eliot's motion, and shortly afterwards Parliament was dissolved, not to meet again for eleven years.

This was not the first occasion on which tears started to this nervous Speaker's eyes. A royal message of 5 June, 1628, commanding the Commons not to meddle with affairs of State or to asperse the King's ministers, having been read in the House, Eliot rose ostensibly to rebut the implied charge of implicating ministers. The Speaker, apprehending that he intended to make an attack upon the Duke of Buckingham, cried whilst he faltered out: "There is a command laid upon me to interrupt anyone that should go about to lay aspersion on the Ministers of State." Eliot then resumed his seat, and on the next day the Speaker brought down a conciliatory message from the King.

[1] *Parliamentary History*, Vol. II, p. 487.

SIR HENEAGE FINCH
1625-26
From a painting at Guildhall by J. M. Wright

SIR JOHN FINCH
1627-8
From a painting by Van Dyck in the possession of Lord Barnard

That Finch was the creature of the Crown appears certain when it is remembered that he was mainly responsible for the judgment in the Ship Money case—that monstrous exaction never intended to be spent wholly on ships. On the other hand, he was quite unable to stem the rising tide of popular indignation, which found its adequate expression in the right of free speech so forcibly contended for by Pym, Hampden, and Coke until it became a reality, and not the sham it had been under the Tudors. But there is this much excuse to be made for Finch, that no Speaker before his time had ever been confronted with so many difficulties.

On 7 June, 1628, the very day on which Charles I gave a reluctant assent to that bulwark of English Constitutional liberty—the Petition of Right—a strong Committee of the Commons was appointed to draw up the preamble of the Bill of Supply. It numbered thirty-two members, including an ex-Speaker and a future one in Coke and Glanville, Selden, the most famous jurist in Europe,[1] Pym, Sir John Eliot, and Sir Dudley

[1] The "great dictator of learning of the English nation" was the title by which Selden was known, not only at home, but on the Continent. Some of his political opinions have been quoted in recent discussions of the great Constitutional question now agitating the public mind. It will, therefore, not be inappropriate to recall the views which he entertained on the relations of the two Houses.

"There be but two erroneous opinions in the House of Commons: That the Lords sit only for themselves, when the truth is, they sit as well for the Commonwealth. The second error is, that the House of Commons are to begin to give subsidies, yet if the Lords dissent, they can give no money."

In another remarkable passage, dealing with the composition of the hereditary chamber, he said:

"The Lords that are ancient we honour, because we know not whence they come; but the new ones we slight, because we know their beginning." (*Selden's Table Talk*, edited by S. W. Singer, 1847.)

Digges. Coke, then in his seventy-seventh year, but in full possession of his remarkable powers, was Chairman, and on the next sitting day he reported the findings of the Committee to the House. The form of words, omitting the assent of the Lords to a money grant, and requiring only their assent to the Bill founded upon such grant to clothe it with the form of law, had been altered three years before and accepted by the Upper House without demur; while in 1626 a Supply Bill, with a similarly worded preamble, was only lost owing to the premature dissolution of Parliament.

In 1628 the popular indignation against the Duke of Buckingham, who, rightly or wrongly, was believed by the Commons to be the primary cause of all the recent strainings of the Royal Prerogative, was at the flood-tide. Coke denounced him by name as "the grievance of grievances," and it was felt that the rights of the representative Chamber in the matter of finance stood in need of more explicit and emphatic assertion. A few days later[1] a free conference between the two Houses was appointed to be held in the Painted Chamber, at which Coke, Glanville, and Hakewil, the latter a legal antiquary deeply versed in the laws and customs of Parliament, were to speak on behalf of the Commons. Unfortunately the names of the Lords' representatives are, contrary to custom, not given in their own journal. On 17 June the conference took place, not in the place first appointed, but in the Star Chamber, and at it the Lords made formal complaint of the wording of the preamble, "Wherein they were excluded, contrary to ancient precedents, *though*

[1] On 13 June.

THE KNIGHTS, CITIZENS AND BURGESSES OF THE COUNTIES, CITIES AN
IN PARLIAMENT, HOLDEN AT WESTMINSTER THE 17 OF MARCH, 16

From a woodcut

UGH TOWNES OF ENGLAND AND WALES AND THE BARONIE OF THE PORTS NOW SITTING
THE THIRD YEAR OF THE RAIGNE OF OUR SOVERAIGNE LORD KING CHARLES, ETC.
ER SIR JOHN FINCH)
ession of Sir Walter Spencer-Stanhope

the last were not so."[1] They intimated their desire to have the name of the Commons struck out of the preamble, requesting the Lower House to show warrant for the insertion, as they, on their part, were prepared to show cause for the omission. Lord Keeper Coventry, whose rôle in life seems to have been, though with indifferent success, to mediate between the King and the popular leaders, had previously been instructed by the Peers to signify at the conference " the great care the Lords had had, all this Parliament, to continue a good correspondency between both Houses, which is best done where nothing is intrenched upon either House ; to show them, that in the front[2] of the Bill of Subsidies, which they lately sent up, the Commons are only named ; whereas in many precedents (but[3] only in the last Parliament) it is ;[4] neither naming the Lords nor yet the Commons ; That the Lords conceived this rather to have happened by some slip, than done of set purpose ; To move them, that the word[5] may be struck out, for as the Commons give their subsidies for themselves and for the representative body of the Kingdom, so the Lords have the disposition of their own."

The Journals of the Commons state expressly that " this course was not liked, as being of a dangerous example, in point of consequence " ; and a further message was delivered to the Peers by Sir Edward Coke,

[1] An allusion apparently intended to refer to the alterations which had been made in 1625 and 1626.

[2] Or preamble.

[3] *i.e.* except.

[4] We, Your Majesty's most humble and loyal subjects, in your High Court of Parliament assembled, etc.

[5] " Commons "

the wording of which is so curious as to deserve quotation in full :—

"There is nothing more desired by that [1] House than the good concurrence between the Lords and them, which they esteem an Earthly Paradise. They have entered into consideration of the proposition to omit the words 'The Commons' in the Subsidy Bill, which they find to be a matter of greater consequence than can be suddenly resolved on. But to-morrow morning they will consider of it, and return an answer with all the convenient speed they can."

A dramatic surprise was in store. A deadlock between the two Houses was averted by the Lords passing the Bill as it stood,[2] and as soon as the Commons learnt of it they sent the following magnanimous message to their late opponents :—

"That, after the Conference yesterday touching the amendment of the Subsidy Bill propounded by the Lords, they took the same presently into their consideration, with a full intent to have proceeded therein this morning ; but were prevented by a constant report that their Lordships had passed and voted the said Bill of Subsidies. Yet, nevertheless, the Commons have thought good to signify unto their Lordships, that they will always endeavour to continue a good correspondency with their Lordships, knowing well that the good concurrence between the two Houses is the very heartstring of the Commonwealth, and they shall be ever as zealous of their Lordships' Privileges as of their own rights."

Whilst the crisis was still undetermined the Duke of Buckingham had called the attention of the Peers to a

[1] The Commons.

[2] *Journals of the House of Lords*, 17 June, 1628, Vol. III, p. 860.

statement made by a member of the House of Commons,[1] who declared that he[2] had said at his own table : " Tush, it makes no matter what the Commons or Parliament doth ; for, without my leave and authority, they shall not be able to touch the hair of a dog." The Duke asked leave to move that the member in question should be called upon to prove his words, as not only had he never uttered them, but that they were never so much as in his thoughts.[3] The next day he returned to the charge, adding that Mr. Lewkenor had acknowledged having made use of the words attributed to him, though he refused to name his informant.

After the Conference was over, the Duke again appealed to the Peers to be allowed to make the same protest before the Commons as he had made in the House of Lords. Lord Keeper Coventry was instructed to intimate his desire to the Lower House, but he does not seem to have made any such dramatic appearance as his entrance at the Bar would have given rise to.[4] The Duke's unpopularity seems to have been at its summit all through the crisis of June, 1628, and, significantly enough, on the same day that the deadlock between Lords and Commons was averted a protégé of his, Dr. John Lambe, was fatally injured by a mob of London apprentices, and a couplet, illustrating the vindictive feeling which prevailed against his patron, was hawked about the town and passed from mouth to mouth :—

" Let Charles and George do what they can,
The Duke shall die like Doctor Lambe."

[1] Mr. Lewkenor. [2] The Duke. [3] *Lords Journals*, 18 June, 1628.
[4] There were two members named Lewkenor in the House at this time, Richard, Knight of the Shire for Sussex, and Christopher, member for Midhurst.

As all the world knows, Buckingham fell by an assassin's knife, at Portsmouth, only two months later.

One further fact concerning this memorable dispute between the two Houses must be placed on record. The Speaker, Sir John Finch, was prevented, on the day of the prorogation, from carrying up the Subsidy Bill to the Lords for the Royal Assent, according to ancient custom. He was thus debarred from making a speech to the Throne and alluding to the victory won by the Commons in the matter of finance. To which, the Journal states, "much exception was taken." Finch's last appearance in the House of Commons — he had succeeded Lord Coventry as Lord Keeper — was when he appeared at the Bar in 1640, after being impeached by the Long Parliament. Though he spoke in his own defence, and spoke well, he did not await the conclusion of the indictment, but fled to The Hague, where he died in 1660.[1]

The Speaker of the "Short Parliament" came of a very ancient West of England family, and it is strange that Sir John Glanville's election should have received the royal approbation, for he was known to have been opposed to the Court, and, in a former House, he had prepared a protest against arbitrary dissolution. Possibly during the period of personal government his convictions had undergone modification. Great changes in popular feeling had, indeed, taken place in those eleven years in which Charles had essayed to rule without Constitutional assistance. Hampden had

[1] The first article in his impeachment was his arbitrary conduct in the Chair on the occasion of Sir John Eliot's motion on tonnage and poundage. He is buried in St. Martin's Church, near Canterbury, under a stupendous marble monument.

SIR JOHN GLANVILLE
1640
From a painting at the National Portrait Gallery

become a popular hero through his opposition to ship money; the abuse of justice by the Court of Star Chamber had sunk deep into the public mind; Strafford had been recalled from Ireland to give the King counsel in his dire necessity; and, though Coke and Eliot were dead and Holles was no longer a member, Hampden and Pym remained the indomitable champions of English liberty when Glanville succeeded to the Chair.

His tenure of it was too brief for fame; but a very singular story of his private life deserves to be rescued from oblivion. His elder brother, Francis, a profligate and a spendthrift, had been cut off with the proverbial shilling by his father, and when the will was read it had such an effect upon the son's mind that he retired from society and became a changed man. One day Sir John, seeing the alteration in his brother's mode of life, invited him to dine at his house, and placing a dish before him, requested him to take off the cover and help himself to the contents. To the surprise of all present, it was found to contain the title deeds of the family estate of Kilworthy, with a formal conveyance from the Speaker to his elder brother. Nor was this the only disinterested action of Glanville's life, for he is said to have reclaimed the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale from an idle and dissolute life to become a great pleader and a greater judge.[1]

When the Long Parliament was about to assemble,

[1] Sir John Glanville's portrait is in the Speaker's collection, and there is another likeness by an unknown artist in the National Portrait Gallery, painted at the age of sixty-two. The ex-Speaker of the Short Parliament was imprisoned in the Tower from 1645 to 1648. Some of his speeches are contained in Rushworth's *Collections*. He was buried at Broad-Hinton, Wilts.

Charles I designed the post of Speaker for Sir Thomas Gardiner, but, as he failed to obtain a seat in the House, William Lenthall, by the merest accident, was chosen in his stead; 504 members being returned to serve at Westminster, of whom more than half had sat in the previous Parliament. The remarkable man who was called to the Chair in November, 1640, was born in 1591, not at Henley-on-Thames as has been generally supposed, but at Hasely in Oxfordshire, of parents whose lineage in that county can be traced to the fifteenth century, when a Lenthall married the heiress of Pypard of Lachford. He received the early part of his education at Thame grammar school under Richard Bourchier, and before he was sixteen years old he was entered at St. Alban Hall, Oxford, was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1616, and entered the House of Commons as Member for Woodstock in the last Parliament of James I. He therefore sat for some years in the House with the redoubtable Coke.

Having prospered at the Bar, he bought Besselsleigh, in Berkshire, from the ancient family of Fettyplace, in 1633, a property which is still enjoyed by his descendants. In the course of the next year, he paid the Cavalier Lord Falkland, it is believed under an assumed name, £7000 for Burford Priory, the house with which his name will always be chiefly associated. His wife, Elizabeth Evans, it will be remembered, was a cousin of Lord Falkland. The statement that Burford was acquired for him by the Parliament appears to be untrue. However that may be, he was living in the town for some years before he became the owner of the Priory.

Nearly every modern writer who has treated the sub-

WILLIAM LENTHALL
1640, 1647, 1654, 1659, 1659-60
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

ject of Parliamentary history and control has lauded Lenthall to the skies. Yet the opinion of many of his contemporaries was decidedly unfavourable. Clarendon thought him "in all respects very unequal to the work; and not knowing how to preserve his own dignity, or to restrain the licence and exorbitance of others, his weakness contributed as much to the growing mischiefs as the malice of the principal contrivers."

D'Ewes, who sat under him from 1640 until ejected from the House by Pride's Purge, was suspicious of his honesty, and being himself a recognised authority on questions of Parliamentary procedure and etiquette, he was a vigilant and unsparing critic of his conduct in the Chair, until it was more than hinted that the Member for Sudbury, and not the Speaker, was the right man to settle questions of order, and to compose jarring discords in debate. On one occasion he reminded Lenthall that it was his duty to read to the House a message from the King, which he was about to delegate to the Clerk. Alternately patronising and criticising, D'Ewes would have been a thorn in any Speaker's side, and during the early days of the Long Parliament Lenthall must often have longed to be rid of him.

Sir H. Mildmay was another member who treated him with scant courtesy. He dared to say in his place that the Speaker should come down to the House in good time. On which Lenthall, in a sudden access of passion, threw down a shilling upon the table, this being the customary fine imposed on members who came in late. But if he was not exactly loved in the early days of his career, he was cordially hated by the Cavaliers when he

continued to sit at Westminster after the death of the King.

There was, however, one responsible official of the Long Parliament whose personal scruples proved, in the hour of crisis, to be tenderer than those of its presiding officer. This was Henry Elsynge, Clerk of the House from 1640 to 1648, when he voluntarily relinquished the service of the Commons to pass the remainder of his days in grinding poverty, rather than have it said that he even tacitly concurred with Cromwell and the Army in the trial and condemnation of his Sovereign. He appears to have been esteemed by men of all shades of political opinion, and to have consistently maintained the dignity of his office, despite occasional differences of opinion with the irrepressible D'Ewes, whose egregious vanity sometimes brought him into collision with constituted authority. Such was Elsynge's acknowledged ability and discretion that in the turbulent years preceding his withdrawal from Westminster quite as much genuine respect was paid to the impersonal Clerk at the table as to the Speaker invested by the House at large with the traditional authority of the Chair.

Lenthall, a consummate opportunist throughout his career, made the utmost possible use of the tool he found ready to his hand, and, in the early days of his power, he was deeply indebted to Elsynge for guidance and advice, habitually leaning upon him as a prop to support his own inexperience in questions of procedure demanding an immediate decision from the Chair. What he thought of his colleague's unfailing devotion to duty and high character appears in the vindication

WESTMINSTER AS SPEAKER LENTHALL KNEW IT
From Hollar's etching of New Palace Yard

of his own conduct, which he issued at the Restoration, when the changed circumstances of the time compelled him to make tardy confession of his gains and losses in the service of the State.

Almost the only unfavourable critics, in modern times, known to the author are John Forster, who in his *Arrest of the Five Members* calls him "weak and commonplace," and the late Mr. Charles Townsend, whose *Memoirs of the House of Commons* still afford such good reading. But Townsend somewhat overstates the case when he calls Lenthall "a poor creature, the tame instrument of a worse and more vulgar tyranny, the buffeted tool of the Army and the Rump, subdued to sit or go, to remain at home or return to find the doors of St. Stephen's shut or open, according to the will of his masters, the officers, and at the bidding of Cromwell." Rather would we say, with Dr. Gardiner, that, if not a great and heroic man, he knew what his duty was, and defined it in words of singular force and dexterity. Great historical crises have been determined one way or the other, and will be determined hereafter, not so much by men of heroic degree as by men who know what duty is and are prepared to act upon the knowledge. In the case of an office like the Speaker's there can be no posthumous fame without contemporary appreciation. And this, notwithstanding the adverse opinions quoted above, was accorded to the presiding genius of the Long Parliament to an extent unparalleled in the previous history of the Chair. The Corporation of Windsor voted him a gift of wine and a sugar-loaf[1] in the early days of his Speakership, and similar presents were showered upon him from time to time by the various

[1] Tighe and Davis, *Annals of Windsor*, 1858, Vol. II, p. 154.

municipalities which espoused the Parliamentary cause. The inscription on his portrait in the National Collection also shows that it was painted expressly to commemorate his action in the Chair at the time of the attempted arrest of the Five Members.

Without any special gifts of oratory, Lenthall, at a time of exceptional difficulty, impressed his personality upon the House by his eminent common sense; and, although his honesty at the time of the breaking off of negotiations with the King has been called in question, there is no room to doubt that by sheer force of character he preserved, during the twenty years in which he was in and out of the Chair, the historic continuity of his office, and this at a time when the monarchy itself suffered an interruption. On the other hand, he was avaricious; obsessed by a desire for the accumulation of wealth;[1] greedy of power and rank; and, towards the close of his career, somewhat unduly impressed with a sense of his own importance. One fact emerges very clearly from his tenure of office: he made rules, with the assistance of Elsynge, for the preservation of order in debate, without which the proceedings of the Long Parliament would have been even more turbulent than they sometimes were.

The quorum of the House of Commons was fixed at its present number on 5 January, 1641, when Lenthall had not been in the Chair more than two months. As late as 1801 an attempt was made to raise the limit to sixty,

[1] At one time he held the Mastership of the Rolls worth £3000 a year, the Speakership for which he received £2000, a commissionership of the Great Seal £1500, the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, £1500; and he was also Chamberlain of the City of Chester, a lucrative sinecure coveted by many lawyers, before and since Lenthall's day.

but without avail, and at forty it remains to this day. In the "Short Parliament" Lenthall was one of the committee on ship money and chairman of the committee on grievances. Mr. Firth, in his admirable Life in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, states that he had occupied the Chair, in the absence of the real Speaker, during one or more debates in the Short Parliament, but the official Journals[1] show that it was as Chairman of the Committee of the whole House that he so presided.

Lenthall's first complete session was an index to the stormy times ahead of him. In one year the House of Commons passed the Triennial Bill, a measure which it almost immediately ignored; it impeached Strafford and Laud; it declared the levying of taxes without consent to be illegal; it abolished the Star Chamber; and, after a short recess, it sat for fifteen hours to pass the Grand Remonstrance.[2] No wonder that the Speaker complained in pathetic tones to the House of the unusual length of their sittings. The unaccustomed strain of long hours in the Chair told upon his strength; he became irritable and petulant, and after a little more than a year of office he had serious thoughts of tendering his resignation to the King.

Long sittings in the House itself were not the only strain upon the Speaker's patience. On a fast day, piously observed by Parliament in November, 1640, Dr. Burgess and Master Marshall preached between them before the unfortunate Commons for the space of seven hours![3] and there were occasions when the protracted

[1] *Commons Journals*, 23 April, 1640, Vol. II, p. 9.

[2] 22 November, 1641.

[3] *Diurnal Occurrences of the Great and Happy Parliament*, 1641, p. 4.

debates prevented the Speaker from going home to dinner.

Lenthall's personal expenditure at this time was heavy, as he entertained lavishly, amongst his guests being many courtiers as well as members of the Lower House.[1] Early in his career he lived in a house on the site of the Westminster Fire Office in King Street, Covent Garden; but later on he took Goring House, on the site of Buckingham Palace, then a perfect *rus in urbe*, and it was there that most of his entertaining was done. Sir John Lenthall, his son, also lived in the same house and seems to have owned the freehold at one time.

On 3 January, 1641–42, that misguided monarch Charles I desired to impeach the five most prominent opponents of his government in the House of Commons,[2] and he sent a message, delivered at the Bar of the House to the Speaker, requiring from him the five members, that they might be arrested, in His Majesty's name, on a charge of high treason. Lenthall, by command of the House, enjoined them to give attendance in the House *de die in diem*. On the next day the House met early in the morning, and considered in committee the charges which the King had brought against five of its number. Notice was taken of the muster of armed men at Whitehall and in the immediate neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament. At noon the sitting was suspended "for an hour's space," but before it had ended the King's design to seize the accused was unfolded.

[1] On 9 April, 1642, the House voted Lenthall a sum of £6000 in consideration of his long and strict attendance to duty.

[2] Denzil Holles, Haselrig, Pym, Hampden, and Strode.

Lenthall returned to the Chair between one and two o'clock, when the House resumed the discussion on the gathering of armed men in the precincts of Westminster. The five members were then in their places, uncertain whether to remain or to depart, when news was brought in hot haste to the Speaker by a Mr. Fiennes to the effect that the King was nearing Westminster Hall at the head of a large company of guards. Leave was given to the accused to withdraw, but they had barely quitted the House and reached the boats which lay on the river at Westminster Stairs, when a loud knock on the door announced the entrance of the only King of England who has ever penetrated into a House of Commons in session.

According to Rushworth, the Clerk-Assistant, who was, of course, an eye-witness of all the events of that memorable day: "His Majesty entered the House, and as he passed up towards the Chair, he cast his eye on the right hand near the Bar of the House, where Mr. Pym used to sit; but His Majesty not seeing him there (knowing him well) went up to the Chair, and said, 'By your leave, Mr. Speaker, I must borrow your Chair a little'; whereupon the Speaker came out of the Chair, and His Majesty stepped into it. After he had stood in the Chair awhile, casting his eye upon the members as they stood up uncovered, but could not discern any of the five members to be there—nor, indeed, were they easy to be discerned (had they been there) among so many bare faces all standing up together,

"Then His Majesty made this speech:—

"'Gentlemen,

"'I am sorry for this occasion of coming unto you. Yesterday I sent a Serjeant-at-arms upon a very im-

portant occasion, to apprehend some that by my command were accused of High Treason; whereunto I did expect obedience, and not a message. And I must declare unto you here, that albeit no king that ever was in England, shall be more careful of your privileges, to maintain them to the utmost of his power, than I shall be, yet you must know that in cases of treason, no person hath a privilege. And therefore I am come to know if any of these persons that were accused are here.'

"Then, casting his eyes upon all the members in the House, he said, 'I do not see any of them; I think I should know them.'

"'For I must tell you, gentlemen, that so long as these persons that I have accused (for no slight crime, but for treason) are here, I cannot expect that this House will be in the right way that I do heartily wish it. Therefore I am come to tell you, that I must have them, wheresoever I find them.'

"Then His Majesty said, 'Is Mr. Pym here?' To which nobody gave answer. 'Well, since I see all my birds are flown, I do expect from you, that you shall send them unto me, as soon as they return hither. But I assure you, on the word of a king, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other.

"'And now since I see I cannot do what I came for, I think this no unfit occasion to repeat what I have said formerly, That whatsoever I have done in favour, and to the good of my subjects, I do mean to maintain it.

"'I will trouble you no more, but tell you I do expect as soon as they come to the House, you will send them to me; otherwise I must take my own course to find them.'"

When the King was looking about the House, the Speaker standing below by the Chair, His Majesty asked

JOHN RUSHWORTH, CLERK ASSISTANT OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
1640
From a painting at the Speaker's House

him whether any of these persons were in the House? whether he saw any of them? and where they were? To which the Speaker, falling on his knees, thus answered :—

"May it please your Majesty,

"I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly beg Your Majesty's pardon, that I cannot give any other answer than this, to what Your Majesty is pleased to demand of me."

The King, having concluded his speech, went out of the House, which by this time was in great disorder, and many cried out, so that he might hear, "Privilege! Privilege!" Fortunately for posterity, Rushworth, on this occasion, disregarded the condition of his appointment on 25 April, 1640, namely: "That he shall not take any notes here without the precedent directions and command of this House, but only of the orders and reports made to this House." On the contrary, whilst the hand of Elsynge, his official superior, was stayed by doubt, Rushworth took down the King's words in shorthand, and also the memorable reply which he received from Lenthall. The accuracy of his notes is unquestionable, as the King, baffled and perplexed as he was when standing on the step of the Speaker's chair, had noticed Rushworth's pen at work and sent for the report of the words so noted down, returning it to him with corrections. The incidents of this single day inspired John Forster, the biographer of Dickens, with material for an entire volume. Soon after this unique incident in the history of the House of Commons Charles left Whitehall, never to return to it till he came there to die; and

on the final disruption between Crown and Parliament the only course which remained was the arbitrament of arms.

In June, 1642, the Speaker gave a horse and fifty pounds in money in defence of the Parliament, a sufficient indication of the trend of his political convictions, and in direct contrast to the fulsome language in which he had addressed the Throne at the conclusion of the session of 1641. In that speech, reported in full in the Journals of the House of Lords for 2 December, he said :—

" Give me leave here, most gracious Sovereign, to sum up the sense of eleven months' observation, without intermission (scarce) of a day, nay an hour in that day, to the hazard of life and fortune, and to reduce all into this conclusion : The endeavours of your Commons assembled, guided by your pious and religious example, is to preserve Religion in its purity, without mixture or composition, against these subtle invaders ; and, with our lives and fortunes, to establish these Thrones to your sacred person, and those beams of Majesty your Royal progeny, against treason and rebellion."

Lenthall probably participated in the spoliation of Whitehall Palace, and he secured for his own collection a portrait of the King, by Vandyck,[1] and a group, in the manner of Holbein, of Sir Thomas More and his family. This latter picture hung at Burford Priory for many years, and after being sold in 1833, it reappeared at Christie's during the present year,[2] when it fetched 950 guineas at auction.

Some of the Speaker's biographers have assumed, quite erroneously, that he secured for the gallery at

[1] Sometimes stated, however, to have been a gift to the Speaker from the Sovereign.

[2] 1910.

Burford some of the pictures removed from Hampton Court at this period. In making this statement they were probably unaware that Lenthall owned a large landed property in Herefordshire, also called Hampton Court, which had been in the possession of his family since the reign of Henry IV. Sir Roland Lenthall, Master of the Robes to that sovereign, and who fought at Agincourt, had licence to embattle his manor-house and to impark a thousand acres, and from his brother Walter, whose will was dated in 1421, the Speaker was seventh in direct descent. A curious portrait, painted on panel, presented by Henry IV to Sir Roland, is still preserved at Besselsleigh, together with the bulk of the pictures from Burford, an interesting collection of Stuart relics, including a glove of Charles I, the Speaker's walking-stick, a portrait group of himself and his family by Dobson, and a great number of rare Civil War tracts and pamphlets. The canopy of the Chair which Lenthall filled with such distinction was presented by him to Radley Church, near his Berkshire estate, at the Restoration. Though black with age, it is still in good preservation, and is in all probability the oldest piece of Parliamentary furniture in existence.

Lenthall continued to preside over the House until 26 July, 1647, when, the Army and the Parliament having quarrelled, both Lords and Commons and the City were placed at the mercy of the military party, which had, by that time, become a highly organised political association. The Speaker, acting on a hint conveyed to him by Rushworth, abandoned his post and left London, fearing the violence of the mob. On the same day the Common Council appeared at Westminster

and compelled the two Houses by threats to rescind their late votes, Cromwell and the army being the absolute masters of the situation.

"Several members having been desired by the House to repair to the Speaker's house,[1] reported that Mr. Speaker was not to be heard of, that he had not lodged at his house that night, but was gone out of town yesterday morning."[2]

On 6 August the truants returned with the army for escort, and Lenthall was back in the Chair he had so recently deserted. An ordinance annulling all orders "made or pretended to be made" in his absence was promptly passed, and Pride's Purge, the real object of which was to exclude the Presbyterians from the House as being too favourable to the King, took place on December, 1648, apparently without articulate protest from the Speaker. It has often been stated by unauthoritative writers that in the previous August Lenthall gave his casting vote in favour of breaking off negotiations with the King in the Isle of Wight on the basis of the Hampton Court proposals. Neither Dr. Gardiner, in his exhaustive *History of the Civil War*, nor Professor Firth, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, makes any allusion to this supposed discreditable incident in his career; and the present writer was at first disposed to regard both debate and division as the phantom of some partisan brain. However, on searching the official Journal for the year in question, he found that on 28 July—not in the month of August—the Speaker did give a casting vote, but only on a minor and immaterial issue

[1] Goring House, in Pimlico, now Buckingham Palace.
[2] *Commons Journals*, 29 July, 1647.

connected with a more important decision of the House. On the question being put: "That a Treaty be had in the Isle of Wight with the King in person, by a Committee appointed by both Houses upon all the propositions presented to him at Hampton Court, for the taking away of Wards and Liveries, and for settling of a safe and well-grounded Peace," a member, unnamed, moved that the words "and not elsewhere" be added after the words "Isle of Wight" to the question already proposed from the Chair. On a division being taken, fifty-seven were found to have voted for the inclusion of those words, and fifty-six against. A Mr. Askew, who was in the Gallery at the time, and who withdrew into the Committee Chamber without having declared upon which side he wished his vote to be recorded, was ordered by the Speaker to make his choice, and having given his vote with the Yeas,[1] the numbers became equal, fifty-seven on either side. The Speaker then gave his casting vote, but only against the addition of the words "and not elsewhere"; and on the Main Question being put, it was unanimously resolved "that a Treaty be concluded," etc. etc., in the terms of the original motion.[2]

Whilst Lenthall must therefore be acquitted of the charge of having influenced the decision of the House at a critical moment in the King's fortunes, he cannot be wholly exonerated from a suspicion of double dealing at this period in the struggle between the Crown and the Parliament, as there is evidence of his having been engaged in secret correspondence with the Prince of Wales at the very moment that the question of resuming nego-

[1] *Sic* in the original Journal, but the sense requires the substitution of the word "Noes" for "Yeas."

[2] *Commons Journals*, Vol. V, p. 650.

tiations with his royal father was hanging in the balance. Manning, though he may be presumed to have consulted the Journals of the House when he wrote his book on the lives of the Speakers, gives an inaccurate version of the facts related above, and treats Lenthall's vote as if it had turned the scales in favour of the King, which, it will be seen, it did not.

It was, however, Lenthall's casting vote which saved the life of Lord Goring;[1] and the humanity and courage which he displayed in incurring the displeasure of the more powerful party, which was in favour of sending Norwich to the scaffold, probably induced him, on his deathbed, to issue a public apology for his attitude at the King's trial. After Goring's reprieve the Speaker was invited to a banquet by the Lord Mayor, who resigned to him the civic sword, an honour usually paid to Royalty alone.

After the establishment of the Commonwealth the nation was not truly represented at Westminster, and the rift between the Army and the Parliament broadened in consequence. A Bill was brought in, with Cromwell's approval, to fix a time for the dissolution of the existing House, as many of his adherents were beginning to chafe under the uncontrolled rule of a single chamber. During the Dutch war the Army became still more disaffected, until it was rumoured that Cromwell was meditating the restoration of monarchical government under another guise. "What if a man should take upon himself to be King!" he said to Whitelocke, realising, as he did, that the rivalry between the Army and the Parliament could not be indefinitely prolonged without grave danger to the State.

[1] Afterwards Earl of Norwich.

Continuous Parliamentary government is, in all essentials, antagonistic to the supremacy of an army, and this was the condition which Cromwell had to take seriously into account when, in 1653, he determined to get rid of the existing House of Commons, lest the Army, which had made him what he was, should instal Lambert, the second man in England and the darling of the soldiery, in his place. After he had addressed a meeting of officers at the Cockpit, in the month of April, urging the reform of the realm, but not with the existing Parliament, news was brought to him at Whitehall that the House was disposed to bring its existence to a close. The rumour proved to be untrue, for the House was busily engaged in passing a Bill designed to perpetuate its authority. Once his mind was made up Cromwell acted at once. He marched a file of musketeers down to the House, and stationed them at the very spot where Charles I's guard had remained stationed on the occasion of the attempted arrest of the five members. This time they filed through the doorway, Cromwell shouting to the House that he would put an end to "their prating." The Speaker was pulled out of the Chair, the "bauble" mace was taken away, the members were dispersed by force, and Cromwell, with the keys in his pocket, returned to Whitehall. "Make way for honester men!" was the cry which rang in Lenthall's ears as he was helped out of the chair.

Scobell, the Clerk of the House, siding with the victor, put the finishing touch to the work of the Lord General by entering on the Journal page: "Wednesday, 20th April, 1653. This day his Excellency the Lord General dissolved this Parliament." He made a false entry in

order to curry favour with Cromwell, well knowing that the only authority which could effect a dissolution of the House of Commons was the Crown. Though Cromwell could and did disperse the House, he could not dissolve it.

With the expulsion of the Long Parliament fell Lenthall, for a time, for he was not a member of the Barebones or Little Parliament which elected Francis Rous as its Speaker. This assembly, "the Reign of the Saints," [1] consisted of 140 nominees of Cromwell, which, after it had served the purpose of its masters by preparing the Instrument of Government, and paving the way for Oliver's assumption of the title of Protector, was cajoled by its Speaker into summary abdication.

In the first Parliament of Oliver, Protector, summoned in September, 1654, the first name put forward was that of the old Speaker. "Something was said to excuse him, by reason of his former services, and something objected as if he had served so long, that he had been outworn"; [2] but in the end his re-election to the Chair was unanimous, "in regard of his great experience and knowledge of the orders of the House and his dexterity in the guidance of it." This Parliament came to an end on 22 January, 1654–55; but in the next, the second Parliament of the Protectorate, he was not re-elected to the Chair.

Lenthall now hankered after a writ of summons to Cromwell's House of Lords, and he complained that he, who had been for some years the first man of the nation, was denied to be a member of either House of Parliament;

[1] *Oliver Cromwell*, by John Morley, 1900, p. 358.
[2] Burton's Diary.

for he was held to be incapable of sitting in the House of Commons by his place as Master of the Rolls, whereby he was obliged to attend merely as an assistant in the other. Cromwell eventually sent him a writ, and in the caricature of the Upper House, which met in January, 1658, he took his place, in company with Fleetwood, Monk, and Pride. Hazelrig, whom Cromwell had designed for the same dignity, refused to be promoted, and became the recognised leader of the Commons, and, after Cromwell's death, one of the most powerful men in England.

On the fall of Richard Cromwell the Army desired to restore the Long Parliament, and a deputation waited on Lenthall to urge him to return to his seat. After many excuses,[1] he consented to preside over the forty-two members of the Rump, and on 7 May, 1659, he proceeded once more to St. Stephen's Chapel with the mace in front of him. His position was now greatly increased in dignity, even commissions in the army were not valid until countersigned by him, and no Speaker before him was invested with such far-reaching authority.

> "Cut out more work than can be done
> In Pluto's year but finish none,
> Unless it be the bulls of Lenthall,
> That always pass'd for fundamental."[2]

Once more the attenuated assembly was to be violently dispersed. On 13 December Lambert drew up his forces in Westminster, obstructing all passages to the House both by land and water, setting guards at all the doors, and interrupting the members from coming to take their seats. When the Speaker appeared in his

[1] Lenthall had previously declared that he was not altogether satisfied that the death of the King had not put an end to the Parliament.

[2] Butler's *Hudibras*, and an obvious allusion to the "Rump."

coach the horses were turned back. "Do you not know me?" he said. "If you had been with us at Winnington Bridge, we should have known you," replied the soldiers.[1] Lenthall was unceremoniously conducted to his own house, the mace was taken from him by Lambert, and the Army recovered supreme authority.

On Christmas Eve, 1659, a new revolution took place. The soldiery assembled in Lincoln's Inn Fields and resolved to restore the Parliament. They halted in Chancery Lane at the Speaker's door, for Lenthall was in residence at the Rolls House, and there they hailed him as their general and the father of their country. Two days later he was again in the Chair, and the remnants of the Long Parliament were once more restored. Pepys noted in his diary that the Speaker hesitated to sign the writs for the choice of new members in the place of the excluded, but on Monk declaring for a free Parliament in February, 1659–60, the Restoration was in sight. Military and Parliamentary rule had alike become distasteful and obnoxious to the people, and the nation at large was prepared to welcome the restoration of the Monarchy.

Lenthall, having decided to throw in his lot with Monk, declared himself to be devotedly attached to the monarchical principle, and he told a personal friend, who was present at his deathbed,[2] that Monk was able to assure Charles II that, had it not been for his secret concurrence and assistance, the Restoration could never have been brought about.

[1] Sir George Booth headed a rising in Cheshire for Charles II. Lambert marched against him and defeated him at Winnington (not "Warrington," as the *Dictionary of National Biography* has it) Bridge.

[2] Dr. Dickenson, a physician in St. Martin's Lane and a Fellow of Merton.

Lenthall was a candidate for the University of Oxford in the Convention Parliament, but, in spite of Monk's influence being cast in his favour, he was not elected, nor was he able to retain the Mastership of the Rolls at the Restoration. He was excepted from the Act of Indemnity, but, possibly on account of his having lent Charles II £3000, a sum which has never been repaid to this day, he subsequently obtained the King's pardon.[1]

His son, Sir John Lenthall, was returned for Abingdon in 1660, but his connection with Parliament on this occasion was brief. Having made an incautious speech on the Indemnity Bill, in which he said "that he that drew his sword against the King committed as high an offence as he that cut off the King's head," he was severely reprimanded at the bar by the new Speaker, Sir Harbottle Grimston, who had no great liking for the presiding genius of the Long Parliament, and, perhaps, rather welcomed the opportunity of administering a reproof to his offspring. Two days later he was expelled the House, soon after to be rewarded by the King with the Governorship of Windsor Castle.

Lenthall seems to have thought it advisable to publish a pamphlet, copies of which are now extremely rare, purporting to give a full and accurate account of his profits and gains in the public service from 1648 to 1660, but deliberately excluding all mention of sums received before the first-mentioned date. In it he declared that before he became Speaker he had an assured income of £2500 from his practice at the Bar, that when he succeeded Sir Charles Cæsar as Master of the Rolls the

[1] The original document with the royal seal and signature is still preserved by the family at Besselsleigh.

emoluments of the office were less than in the time of his predecessor by £2200, a sum equivalent to what he received in respect of private Bills and Pardons. He pointed out that as the Clerks of the House were also paid by fees these could not have been excessive, since one of the ablest men who ever executed that office[1] died in such poor circumstances that he was buried at the expense of his friends. He asserted that the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster brought him "only labour for his pains," that he was prepared to state on oath that from 1648 he never received anything from the Chair by way of fee or reward; and that, having settled the bulk of his estate on his son, he estimated his total annual income in 1660 at £800, and his personal property (including, oddly enough, his debts) at no more than £2000. The short remainder of Lenthall's life was passed in retirement at his Oxfordshire home.

In a remote situation in a fold of the Cotswold hills, in the valley of the little river Windrush, and surrounded by the most delightful sylvan scenery, Burford Priory exhibits many interesting features of the domestic architecture of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. After years of wanton neglect, which eventually led to its becoming a melancholy ruin—the home of bats and owls—it has recently been thoroughly and lovingly repaired, rather than *restored*, under the capable supervision of its present owner, Colonel de Sales La Terriere, acting as his own architect.

In 1808 the whole of the north wing was pulled down, together with half of the eastern front. The

[1] Elsynge.

BURFORD PRIORY, FORMERLY THE RESIDENCE OF SPEAKER LENTHALL, AS RESTORED IN 1908-9

south wing, which was built by the Speaker—as was the existing but disused chapel connected with the main building by an external gallery—fell into decay and was demolished in order to provide material for new farm buildings within the last fifty or sixty years. Neither of the wings so ruthlessly destroyed has been rebuilt, but the ballroom, or great chamber, on the first floor, with a beautiful plaster ceiling and a chimney-piece enriched with the armorial bearings of the Lenthalls, presents much the same appearance as it must have done when the Speaker of the Long Parliament hung the pictorial spoils of Whitehall on its lofty walls.

An even more interesting feature of the Priory, as it stands to-day, is the rediscovery of some of the original pointed arches of the thirteenth-century religious house. These, which were found embedded in the interior walls during the repairs undertaken during the last two years, appear to have been deliberately concealed from view in the time of Henry VIII by the then owners, the Harmans, whose heraldic supporters, with the Lenthall coat of arms between them, are still to be seen over the entrance door. These arches, the very existence of which must have been quite unknown to the Speaker, have been carefully re-erected within a few feet of where they were found, and constitute, with their fine curves and time-worn edges, an enduring link between the monastic building and the Tudor dwelling-house. The stone fire-place, now in the hall, though not occupying its original site, may date from an even earlier period than the ownership of the Harmans.

Since its conversion from ecclesiastical to lay uses Burford has known many owners, most of them

persons of distinction in their day, and nearly all of whom have left their mark upon the old building. After the Harmans it came into the possession of the Duchess of Somerset, but, having passed to the Crown, Queen Elizabeth sold it to Sir John Fortescue, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1589, who, in his turn, parted with it to Sir Lawrence Tanfield, Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1625. He rebuilt the greater part of the house in the reign of James I, and Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, Lenthall's immediate predecessor here, was his grandson.

King James and Anne of Denmark stayed with the Tanfields at the Priory in 1603 ; Charles I refreshed himself and his troops at the Speaker's in 1644 on his way from Oxford to Bourton-on-the-Water ; Charles II dined here in 1681 with Sir John Lenthall,[1] and attended the races held on the neighbouring downs, the King being received by the Mayor and Corporation of Burford on the occasion. These time-honoured races, which gave birth to the Bibury Club of after days, were held on an upland course between Burford and Bibury for 150 years before their removal, first to Danebury, near Stockbridge, and, more recently, to Salisbury. Nell Gwynne was also an occasional visitor to the Priory in its roystering days, and it will be recollected that one of the minor titles of her son, the Duke of St. Albans, was Lord Burford.

William III slept at the Priory in 1695, when it was in the occupation of the fifth Earl of Abercorn, who married the widow of William Lenthall, only daughter

[1] The Speaker's son and a well-known profligate at the Court of Whitehall.

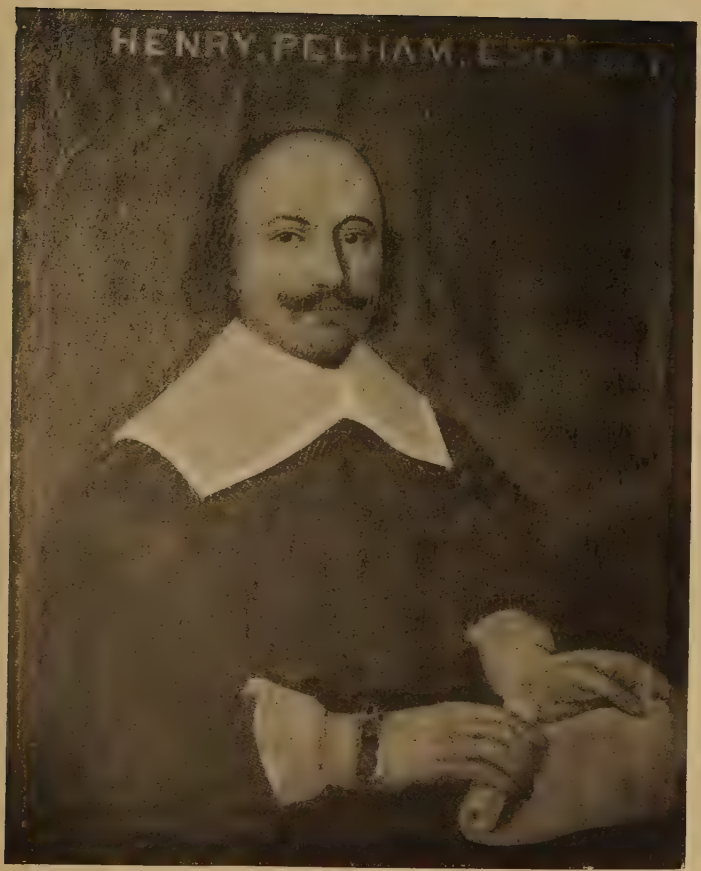
and heiress of James Hamilton, Lord Paisley, by his wife Catherine, daughter of a brother of the Speaker. Lord Abercorn seems to have carried on the dissipated traditions of the Priory in the days of Charles II, for he was tried at Oxford in 1697 for the murder of John Prior of Burford, his wife's steward. It is only fair to add that he was acquitted of the capital charge. Incidentally, justice was appeased by the hanging of a gardener in his stead. Numerous alterations were made to the house at the beginning of the nineteenth century, since which its history has been one of sordid disfigurement at the hands of its responsible owners until it was saved from utter ruin and destruction by Colonel La Terriere in 1908.

When Lenthall was nearing his end his conscience so troubled him that he sent to Witney to ask Dr. Ralph Brideoak, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, to come over to Burford and hear his dying confession and to absolve him from his sins. It was then that he apologised for his share in the trial and execution of the King; and though it is usually unsafe to attach much importance to deathbed confessions, admirers of the independence which he displayed earlier in his Parliamentary career can appreciate the remorse which filled his soul and induced him to make such reparation as he could when at the point of death.

Dr. Brideoak, having entreated the dying man to relieve his conscience by a full confession, invited him to say to what extent he considered that his public career had transgressed the teaching of the Ten Commandments. Laying stress upon the fact that disobedience, rebellion, and schism were the greatest

sins against the fifth of these precepts, Lenthall replied: "Yes, sir, there is my trouble, my disobedience, not against my natural parents, but against the Pater Patriæ, our deceased Sovereign. I confess, with Saul, I held their clothes whilst they murdered him; but herein I was not so criminal as Saul was; for God, Thou knowest! I never consented to his death; I ever prayed and endeavoured what I could against it; but I did too much. Almighty God, forgive me!"

"I then desired him to deal freely and openly on that business, and if he knew any of those villains that plotted or contrived that horrid murder, who were not yet detected, now to discover them. He answered that 'he was a stranger to that business; his soul never entered into that secret, but what concerns myself I will confess freely. Three things are especially laid to my charge, wherein, indeed, I am too guilty: that I went from the Parliament to the Army; that I proposed the bloody question for trying the King; and that I sat after the King's death. To the first I may give this answer, that Cromwell and his agents deceived a wiser man than myself, that excellent King, and they might deceive me also, and so they did. I knew the Presbyterians would never restore the King to his just rights; those men swore they would. For the second no excuse can be made, but I have the King's pardon, and I hope Almighty God will show me His mercy also. Yet, sir,' said he, 'even then, when I put the question, I hoped the very putting the question would have cleared him, because I believed four for one were against it; but they deceived me also. To the third I make this candid confession, that it was my own baseness and cowardice and



HENRY PELHAM
1647
From a painting in the possession of the Earl of Yarborough

unworthy fear to submit my life and estate to the mercy of those men that murdered the King, that hurried me on, against my own conscience, to act with them, yet then I thought also I might do some good and hinder some ill. Something I did for the Church and Universities, something for the King, when I broke the Oath of Abjuration, as Sir O. B. and yourself know; something, also, too for his return, as my lord G., Mr. J. T., and yourself know. But the ill I did overweighed the little good I would have done. God forgive me for this also.'" Brideoak then allowed him the absolution of the Church, and Lenthall received the Sacrament the next day. Having repeated the substance of his confession to Dr. Dickenson, of Merton College, who was at Burford at the time, he spent the few remaining hours of his life in devotion and penitential meditation.[1] In his will he humbled himself to the dust, and ordered that no monument should be raised to his memory other than a plain stone with the legend "Vermis sum." The original terms of the will are worth quoting: "As to my body and burial I do leave it to the disposition and discretion of my executors hereafter named. But with this special charge: That it be done as privately as may be without any pomp or state, acknowledging myself to be unworthy of the least outward regard of this world, and unworthy of any remembrance, that have been so great a sinner. And I do further charge and desire that no monument be made for me, but at the utmost a plain stone with this superscription only:

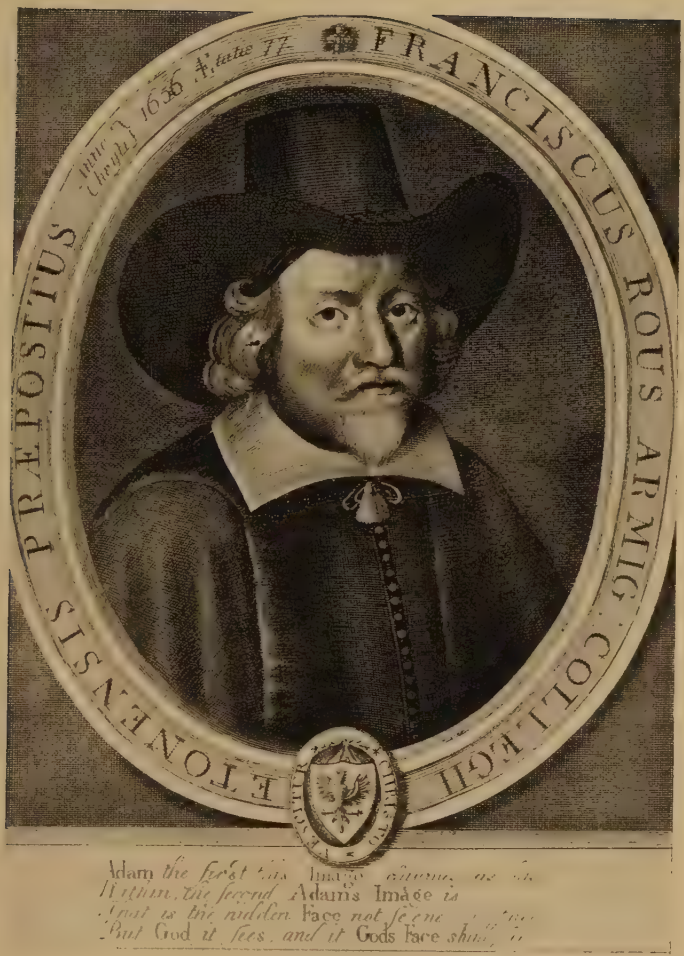
[1] This deathbed repentance and confession was twice printed in 1662, and reissued forty years later as an appendix to the *Memoirs of the Two Last Years of the Reign of King Charles I*, by Sir Thomas Herbert and others.

'Vermis sum.'" The inscription was, however, placed on his coffin plate, as was discovered when the vault in which he was buried was opened to allow of another interment. There is a portrait of Lenthall, attributed to Vandyck, in the Speaker's House, but it is more probably the work of Henry Peart, one of his many pupils. Rushworth, whose name will always be associated with Lenthall, by reason of his action on the attempted arrest of the five members, is also commemorated in the Speaker's Portrait Gallery.

Some mention should be made of the temporary Cromwellian Speakers, eight in number, who sat in the Chair of the Commons between the date of Lenthall's first leaving it in 1647 and the final dissolution of the Long Parliament. Henry Pelham, of Belvoir, Lincolnshire, though not mentioned by Manning, was chosen by the Presbyterian section of the House by general approbation on 30 July, 1647, on Lenthall's joining the Army, and not long after Charles was taken prisoner.[1] The member for Grantham (who sat for the same constituency in the Short Parliament of 1640, and earlier for Great Grimsby) was conducted to the Chair by Sir Anthony Irby and Mr. Richard Lee, and there he remained until replaced by Lenthall in the month of August, when the Army and Cromwell had become the real masters of the situation. As one of the leading Presbyterians, he was secluded and imprisoned when Pride's Purge took place in 1648, but was liberated six days later.

In the "Barebones," or Little Parliament, the Chair

[1] He was the third son of Sir William Pelham, of Brocklesby, by Anne, daughter of Charles, second Lord Willoughby of Parham.



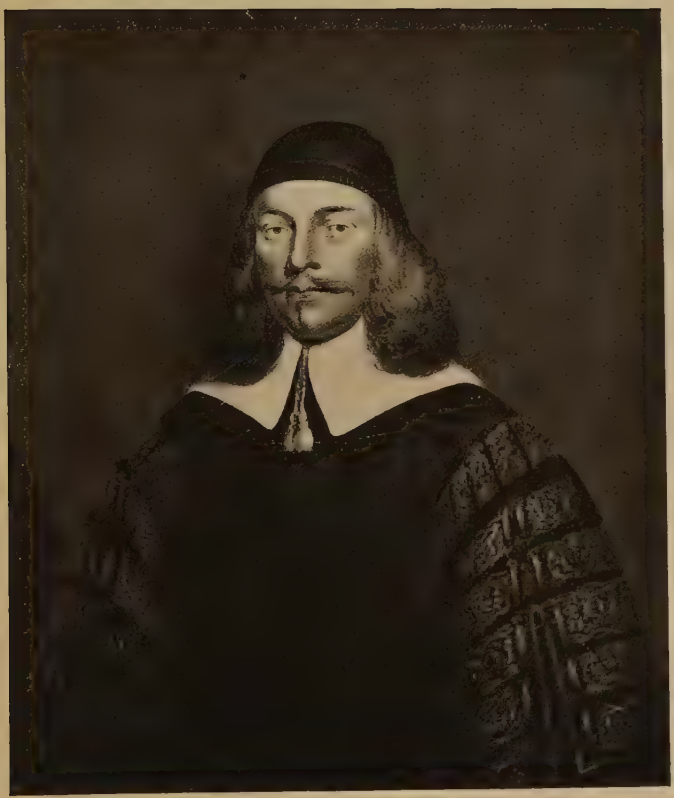
FRANCIS ROUS
1653
From a print

was filled by the Rev. Francis Rous, a Cornish gentleman of good family and education. His career was a most singular one, even in an age of unexpected happenings. An ordinance passed by the Lords on 10 February, 1643–44, deprived Richard Steward, the Provost of Eton, of his post and appointed Rous in his stead "for the term of his natural life." He contrived to get Eton exempted from the "Self-Denying Ordinance," in order that he might retain his emoluments, and it was probably owing to Rous's exertions that the College was also exempted from the sale of the estates of religious corporations. The Provost was rewarded for his subservience in the Chair by a writ of summons to Cromwell's short-lived House of Lords. He was buried in Lupton's Chapel at Eton, and his portrait still hangs in the Provost's Lodge.

Sir Thomas Widdrington, of an old Northumbrian family, many of whose members were Cavaliers, filled the Chair in Oliver's second Parliament, from 17 September, 1656, till it was dissolved on 4 February, 1657–58. He then became Chief Baron of the Exchequer. He was brother-in-law to Fairfax, and sat in the Commons Chair when Cromwell declined the crown. At the Restoration Widdrington was deprived of all his offices. Pepys alludes to him as "My Lord Widdrington going to seal the Patents for the Judges in January, 1659–60," he having been a Commissioner of the Great Seal on three separate occasions. Such evidence as exists as to his demeanour in the Chair shows him to have been anything but a strong Speaker, but his incompetence was perhaps partly due to his habitual ill-health. On 8 January, 1657, the adjournment of the House

for a week was agreed to by reason of his indisposition. On the 12th the Speaker was brought in a sedan chair to the lobby door, and with much ado he was hoisted into the Chair, but "looked most piteously." Being asked to deal plainly with the House, he was invited to declare the cause of his sufferings. "If you please to go on," was his meek answer, "I shall sit till Twelve o'clock." But his intentions were obviously beyond his strength, and the House again adjourned for a week.

In 1657 Cromwell was an inexorable master, and, as Thurloe observes, he required "too much to have been expected" of Parliament. The House confirmed more than a hundred Bills and Ordinances in one day, nothing being read but the titles. From 24 to 30 April members were kept in attendance from eight in the morning till nine o'clock at night, and the strain of sitting dinnerless in the Chair told upon Speaker Widdrington's health. On a division, in which the numbers were equal, he rose and said, "I am a Yea, a No I should say." Amid much ill-bred laughter another member claimed that he too had been mistaken in giving his vote; but it was determined that, while some latitude might be extended to a weary Speaker, other members were not at liberty to recall their votes. Later in the same sitting Speaker Widdrington blundered in putting a question to the House for its decision, and, when the mistake was challenged, he appeared to be quite at a loss to explain his meaning. The House thereupon "fell into great confusion." During Widdrington's temporary absence from indisposition, that great lawyer, Bulstrode Whitelocke, well known from his *Memorials of English Affairs*, filled the



SIR THOMAS WIDDRINGTON
1656
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

BULSTRODE WHITELOCK
1656-7
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

Chair for a short time.[1] When a proposal came before the House that lawyers should be precluded from practising their profession if elected to Parliament, he used the following words :—

" With respect to the proposal for compelling lawyers to suspend their practice while they sit in Parliament, I only insist that in the Act for that purpose it be provided that merchants should forbear their trading, physicians from visiting their patients, and country gentlemen from selling their corn or wool while they are members of this House."

In Richard Cromwell's only Parliament Chaloner Chute, of the Vyne (a fine property which he bought in 1653 from the sixth Lord Sandys), " a worthy gentleman of the long robe," was Speaker. He resigned from ill-health on 9 March, and died on 14 April. He had a great reputation as an advocate, and amongst other eminent men whom he defended was Archbishop Laud. Sir Lislebone Long, " by general consent of the House," was chosen in his stead ; but on 14 March he too informed the House that he was too unwell to sit, and within forty-eight hours of Chute he died. Thomas Bampfylde (M.P. Exeter) succeeded Long on 16 March, 1658–59, after one Mr. Reynell (M.P. Ashburton) had been proposed. Bampfylde was, however, preferred as being " a person of greater experience and of approved learning and gravity." From his nephew, Sir Coplestone Bampfylde, the present Lord Poltimore is descended. This Speaker's tenure of office was interrupted by the Committee of Safety. The last of Lenthall's many substitutes was

[1] He is not mentioned by Manning, but the fact of his having been Speaker is established by reference to the *Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 482.

William Say, or Saye,[1] a Bencher of the Middle Temple, and one of the Regicides, who sat in the Chair for a few days in January, 1659–60, during Lenthall's temporary absence from indisposition. He was a member of the Long Parliament from 1647. At the Restoration his name was exempted from the Act of Indemnity, but he contrived to make his escape to the Continent.

It is a curious fact that of these Cromwellian Speakers Pelham, Rous, and Bampfylde were members of old knightly families boasting pedigrees which satisfied that most exclusive of genealogists, Mr. E. P. Shirley, who included their names in his *Noble and Gentle Men of England.* Lenthall, Widdrington, Chute, and Long were all men of good family. Whitelocke, on his mother's side, was descended from the very ancient Buckinghamshire house of Bulstrode of Hedgerley. Even the Regicide Speaker could claim kinship with the Sir John Say who filled the same office in 1449, so that in the darkest days of the Commonwealth the House was jealous of the status and origin of its presiding officer.

At an age somewhat older than that of most holders of the office, Sir Harbottle Grimston was unanimously elected Speaker at the Restoration, on the motion of Mr. William Pierpont. Early in life he had been a strong Presbyterian, and prominent amongst those who opposed the rise of Cromwell and the Independents in the army. He was excluded from the House by Pride's Purge, and, disapproving as he did of the King's execution, he withdrew from public life. Again elected for Essex in 1656, he was once more excluded. About 1652 he purchased the reversion of the estate of Gorhambury, his second

[1] M.P. Camelford.

CHALONER CHUTE
1658-59
From a painting at the Vyne, Basingstoke

SIR HARBOTTLE GRIMSTON
1660
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery by Lely

wife having been a great-niece of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the builder of the now ruined mansion. Grimston held the Mastership of the Rolls concurrently with the Speakership, and until his death in 1685.[1] At the Restoration he was living in Lincoln's Inn, and he entertained the King at his house there soon after his arrival in London.

The existing mace of the House of Commons dates from Sir Harbottle Grimston's Speakership. The earlier "fool's bauble," removed by Cromwell, was made in 1649 by Thomas Maundy, a goldsmith in Fetter Lane, and, though it was formerly supposed that it was refashioned at the Restoration, it appears certain that the one now in use is wholly of the Charles II period. It weighs upwards of 250 ounces, and is rather less than five feet in length, whereas the Commonwealth mace is known to have been considerably smaller. The tradition that a mace at Kingston, in Jamaica, is the one turned out of the House by Cromwell appears to be without foundation, as the oldest now preserved in that island is of eighteenth-century workmanship. When the House of Commons is not in session the Serjeant-at-Arms returns the emblem of his office to the custody of the Lord Chamberlain's Department, whence it is reissued after each Parliamentary recess.

The Convention Parliament met on 25 April, 1660. Charles II landed at Dover a month later, and on 29 May (his thirtieth birthday) the only one of the Stuarts who had tact and who knew when to give way entered London

[1] In 1803 the Speaker's lineal descendant, the third Viscount Grimston, presented Sir Harbottle's portrait to the historical series preserved at Westminster, and his coat of arms from the old Rolls Chapel is still to be seen in a window of the museum at the Public Record Office.

amidst universal rejoicing. The "Pensionary Parliament" of Charles II, though often unfavourably contrasted with the Long Parliament, showed itself extremely jealous of the privileges of the Commons, and sat for an even greater number of years than its famous predecessor. It extended over seventeen sessions, and was presided over by four Speakers.

The first of these, Sir Edward Turnour, an ancestor of the present Earl Winterton, occupied the Chair for ten whole years. Samuel Pepys, who knew him well, appeared before him on 4 March, 1668, to deliver his celebrated defence of the principal officers of the Navy. In the speech of his life he held the attention of a crowded House for over three hours in justification of himself and his colleagues. So favourable an impression did the speech produce that when Sir William Coventry, the Chief Commissioner of the Navy, met him the next day he greeted him in the following words: "Good-morrow, Mr. Pepys that must be Speaker of the Parliament House." Coventry also told this invaluable public servant that he could earn £1000 a year at the Bar; the Solicitor-General said that he was the best speaker in England; and the Speaker himself declared that in all his experience of the House of Commons he had never heard such a good defence. All which must have been extremely gratifying to Pepys' well-known vanity. The diarist confesses that before going to Westminster on this memorable morning of his life he drank half a pint of mulled sack and a dram of brandy, after which he felt himself "in better order as to courage." He took great interest in the House of Commons even before he became a member, and in his Diary for 27 July, 1663, he

THE MACE

From a photograph in the possession of the Serjeant-at-Arms (Mr. H. D. Erskine of Cardross)

relates how he crowded into the House of Lords, standing close behind the Speaker when he recapitulated the Acts of the session to the King and desired the Royal Assent. "The Speaker's speech was far from any oratory, but was as plain (though good matter) as anything could be, and void of elocution."

No man up to this date had occupied the Chair for anything like so long a time as Speaker Turnour. Lenthall's longest continuous term of office was, as we have shown, under seven years; but during the decade of 1661–71 the Speaker witnessed events as stirring and as far-reaching in their political effect as any of his predecessors had taken part in. He saw the wreck of Clarendon (though his policy continued to commend itself to the majority of the House of Commons), the loss of England's command of the sea in the disastrous war with Holland, ending with the humiliating Treaty of Breda, hurriedly concluded after the Dutch fleet had sailed up the Medway, bombarded Chatham, and threatened Dover and Harwich. And when the thunder of the enemy's guns caused a panic in London the Speaker was hindered from taking the Chair until after the King had proceeded to the House of Lords, for fear anything should be resolved upon by the Commons contrary to the wishes of the Court.[1]

[1] Considerable light is thrown upon the temper of the House at the time of this discreditable manœuvre by the ubiquitous Pepys. Writing on 25 July, 1667, when details of the disaster were still wanting, he said: "Contrary to all expectation by the King that there would be a thin meeting, there met above 300 this first day, and all the discontented party; and indeed the whole House seems to be no other almost. The Speaker told them, as soon as they were sat, that he was ordered by the King to let them know he was hindered by some important business to come to them and speak to them as he had

Speaker Turnour saw the rise of the Cabal, that inner conclave of the King's advisers, two of whose members, at least, were in favour of restoring the Roman Catholic religion in this country; but he may never have known that by a secret treaty, which Charles concluded with Louis XIV in 1670, in return for a heavy bribe, the King was pledged to declare his own adhesion to the Church of Rome as soon as the times were deemed to be ripe for a public declaration.

Like many other public men at this period, Speaker Turnour received large grants of public money, amounting in the aggregate to £11,000, as free gifts; nor did he altogether escape the stigma of corruption. It was found that he was in receipt of a small gratuity from the East India Company, and in 1669 it was rumoured in the House that evidence existed of corrupt dealings on his part on a much larger scale. His elevation to the Judicial Bench may have been accelerated by a desire to shield him from unpleasant consequences if these charges were found to be proven.

An order which was passed by the House shortly be-

intended, and therefore, ordered him to move that they would adjourn themselves till Monday next, it being very plain to all the House that he expects to hear by that time of the sealing of the peace." Four days later, when the signing of the peace was generally known, he wrote: "I went up to the Painted Chamber thinking to have got in to hear the King's speech, but upon second thoughts did not think it would be worth the crowd, and so went down again into the Hall. . . . But presently comes down the House of Commons, the King having made them a very short and no pleasing speech to them at all." The King informed them that he had made peace, but gave no particulars and dismissed Parliament until October. But it leaked out that the Speaker's detention had been deliberately planned "for fear they should be doing anything in the House of Commons to the further dissatisfaction of the King and his courtiers."

SIR EDWARD TURNOUR
1661
From a painting in the Speaker's House

fore his retirement from the Chair—"That the Back Door of the Speaker's Chambers be nailed up and not opened during any sessions of Parliament"—has given rise to some speculation without eliciting any definite agreement as to its motive. Though backstairs influence was so much in the ascendant at this period, it does not appear that the House, in making the order, had any ulterior object in view beyond regulating the entry of its members through one, and that the main, approach to the Chamber. From a much earlier date the Speaker had been provided with private apartments in which to don his robes, but there is no evidence to show that he was required to live in the Palace in the seventeenth century. Sir Edward Turnour, when in town, lived, like so many of his predecessors, at the Rolls House in Chancery Lane. He died 4 March, 1675, at Bedford during the hearing of the assizes, and was buried with much ceremony at Little Parndon, Essex, on the south side of the chancel.

An account of St. Stephen's Chapel, as it appeared in the sixteenth century, has been given at an earlier page. In the second part of Chamberlayne's *Angliæ Notitia*, published in 1671, there is a very full and interesting account of both Houses of Parliament as Pepys saw them.

"The Commons in their House sit promiscuously, only the Speaker hath a Chair placed in the middle, and the Clerk of that House near him at the Table. They never had any robes (as the Lords ever had), but wear every one what he fancieth most, which to strangers seems very unbecoming the gravity and authority of the Great Council of England."

But few nowadays will be found to endorse the recommendation which follows :—

"During their attendance on Parliament, a robe or grave vestment would as well become the honourable members of the House of Commons, as it doth all the noble Venetians, both young and old, who hath right to sit in the Great Council of Venice, and as it doth the Senators of Rome at this day."

Though Chamberlayne only mentions one Clerk, there had been an assistant at least as early as the reign of James I. In the House of Lords, while the Clerk of the Parliament sat on the "lowermost woolsack" in 1671, his two assistants knelt behind it and wrote their minutes in the same uncomfortable posture. In another passage Chamberlayne speaks of the House of Commons as the "Grand Inquest of the Realm," an early use of a very familiar definition. But even before this the watchful eye of a foreigner had noted the general aspect of the House of Commons in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Monconys, who accompanied the Duc de Chevreuse to London, Oxford, and other places in 1663, has placed on record his impressions of St. Stephen's, and, if for no other reason, they are valuable because they contain the earliest reference of which the author is aware to the green benches of the Lower House :—

"Avant dîner je fus à Westminster, d'où les Deputez de la Chambre Basse sortoient. Le lieu où ils s'assemblent est une Chambre mediocrement grande, environnée de six ou sept rangs de degrez couverts de sarge verte, & disposez en Amphitéatre, au milieu desquels il y a un preau, au fonds duquel vis à vis de la porte est une grande Chaise à bras, avec un dossier de menuë sarge doré & ouvragé, haut de sept ou huit piés, dans lequel s'assoit le President, tournant le dos à la fenêtre, & le visage à la porte. Au dessus de la porte, bien plus haut que les

derniers degrez, il y a une tribune, où il y a encore trois ou quatre rangs de ces degrés ; il y a place pour 500 personnes. Devant la chaise du President il y a un Bureau, où sont les Griffiers, ou Secretaires."

This French traveller and his patron were lodged in Westminster during their visit to London, at a house in the immediate vicinity of Palace Yard, which appears to have been set apart for the reception of foreign ambassadors on their first coming to town.

" Il y a une assez belle place au devant, au fond de laquelle M. le Duc alla loger, à cinq pieces par semaine ou 100 Chelins, dans la maison que M. Brunetti lui avoit loüée, & où le Roi loge les Ambassadeurs extraordinaires les trois premiers jours qu'ils arrivent, & où il les défraye." [1]

The session of 1671 is memorable in the annals of Parliament for the contention then first seriously advanced by the Commons that the Lords were unable to amend a Money Bill. A slight diminution of a proposed duty on sugar having been proposed by the Peers, a deadlock ensued between the two Houses, and, as neither side was disposed to give way, the Bill was dropped. Six years later the same difficulty was experienced when the Lords amended a Bill granting money for an increase in the fleet. On this occasion, however, the Lords did not insist upon their amendment. But in the following year the struggle between the two

[1] Mr. de Moncony's descriptions of London, though little known, are so vivid and so evidently the results of personal experience, that they will repay careful attention. In the *National Review*, some years ago, the present author wrote an article on the French traveller's impressions of 1663, and the above extracts are taken from an edition, published in Paris in 1695, in the writer's possession.

Houses was renewed over a Money Bill for the disbandment of troops. Public opinion being found to be hostile to a reduction of the armed forces of the Crown, in view of the threatening attitude of France, the question was not fought out to a conclusion; but the venal assembly, contemptuously known as the "Pensionary Parliament," passed the Resolution quoted in every textbook of constitutional history, which has ever since been held to debar the Lords from amending, though not of rejecting or suspending, a Money Bill originating in the Lower House.

Sir Job Charlton, whom Roger North calls "an old Cavalier, loyal, learned, grave, and wise," was the next Speaker. He is generally said to have been the son of a London goldsmith, by name Robert Charlton, and that his mother was the daughter of another, by name Thomas Harby; but in the exhaustive list of London goldsmiths printed in Jackson's *English Goldsmiths and their Marks*, neither of these names occurs. It seems more probable that he came of a Shropshire stock, and that his father was Robert Charlton, of Whitton, in that county. He represented Ludlow in 1659, 1660, and 1661, and died at his seat at Ludford, Herefordshire, 24 May, 1697. As he only held office for eleven days, little or nothing is known of his conduct in the Chair. He became Justice of the Common Pleas, but was removed on account of his opposition to James II's dispensing power. He had also been Chief Justice of Chester, but here he was no luckier, for he had to resign the post in favour of Jeffreys, who had "laid his eye on it." Charlton was the first Speaker to be made a Baronet, and when he resigned from ill-health, the House, for the

SIR JOB CHARLTON
1672-3
From a painting in the Speaker's House

first time for 150 years, elected a Speaker who was not a lawyer. This was Sir Edward Seymour, of Maiden Bradley, Wilts, an aristocratic Tory, who held office for five years, when he too resigned on the plea of ill-health, though there is reason to believe that this was but a convenient excuse. The real reason was a difference of opinion with Danby, the master mind of the Government.

Seymour was first voted to the Chair on 18 February, 1672–3, and in October of the same year a wholly irregular debate was initiated by Sir Thomas Littleton, who declared that he was unfitted to hold the office, owing to his being a Privy Councillor and his having admission to the most secret conclaves of the Court. "You are too big for that Chair, and for us," he said; "and you, that are one of the governors of the world, to be our servant, is incongruous." A Mr. Harbord was even more uncomplimentary. "You expose the honour of the House in resorting to gaming-houses, with foreigners as well as Englishmen, and other ill places. I think you to be an unfit person to be Speaker, by your way of living." Colonel Strangways, however, came to Seymour's rescue, declaring that as for his being a gamester, exception might just as well be taken to the Judicial Bench for the same reasons.[1]

In Seymour's first session a debate arose on the printing of addresses to the King in connection with grievances concerning the billeting of soldiers. On a motion to adjourn the debate, the numbers (on a division) were found to be equal, whereupon the Speaker gave his casting vote in favour of adjournment, saying, "He would have his reason for his judgment recorded, viz.

[1] Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. IV, p. 589.

because he was very hungry." Seymour was a very proud, not to say overbearing, man, and he was unpopular with the general body of members. A trick was once played upon him by a wag, who handed him a petition, which the Speaker began to read aloud: "The humble petition of Oliver Cromwell—the devil," whereon a shout of laughter caused him to throw down the paper and hasten from the Chair.

On 10 May, 1675, a serious disturbance arose in Committee of the whole House on the consideration of His Majesty's answer to an address for recalling British subjects from the service of the French King. The riot could only have been quelled by a strong man, and the Speaker's intervention has scarcely had a parallel since that day until Mr. Speaker Peel's memorable intervention in the Home Rule debate on 27 July, 1893.[1] Seymour "very opportunely and prudently rising from his seat near the Bar, in a resolute and slow pace, made his three respects through the crowd, and took the Chair." The mace was laid on the table and the disorder ceased on the Speaker stating that he had acted, "though not according to order, with the intent of bringing the House into order again."[2] He "maintained the dignity of the Chair after that of the House was gone" by obliging every member present to stand up in his place and engage on his honour not to resent any of that day's proceedings. As an instance of his pride it is related that when he was presented to William III the King remarked that he believed Sir Edward was of the Duke of Somerset's family, whereupon the ex-Speaker retorted "that the

[1] *Commons Journals*, Vol, CXLVIII, p. 469.
[2] Grey's *Debates*, Vol. III, p. 129.

SIR EDWARD SEYMOUR
1672-73
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

Duke was rather of *his* family." Once, when his coach broke down at Charing Cross, he ordered the next gentleman's to be stopped and brought to him, and when its occupant expressed surprise, Sir Edward told him that it was more proper for him to walk in the streets than for the Speaker of the House of Commons.

The year 1675 was a memorable one in English politics. Alternately inclining to the counsels of Shaftesbury and religious toleration, and to the advice of Danby, who desired the supremacy of the Anglican Church, Charles had allowed the Nonconformists to be harried to please the Churchmen, and had assented to the Test Act of 1673 to gratify the hatred of both persuasions for the Roman Catholics. But a haunting fear in the public mind that the Protestant succession to the throne was still endangered convinced Danby that a new and more stringent test was required. The reorganisation of his supporters in the Commons which followed led to a cleavage of parties, out of which was gradually evolved the permanent division of English political opinion into two distinct bodies : the Tory and the Whig of after days.

Whilst Danby's proposals were under consideration the relations of the two Houses became once more strained. Evelyn, writing in the summer of 1675, mentions a conference of Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber, at which the Lords accused the representatives of the people of infringing their privileges, and brought forward once more the oft-quoted precedent of Henry IV. To gain time the King suddenly prorogued Parliament for four months, and the storm blew over.

Sir Robert Sawyer, Pepys' " old chamber fellow " at Magdalene College, Cambridge, succeeded Sir Edward

Seymour in the Chair on 11 April, 1678; but years before that the same assiduous gossip had noted that "he do very well in the world." Like his two predecessors, he resigned from ill-health. Within a month of his election he was found to be suffering from a violent fit of the stone, attributed to his long sitting one day in the Chair. Sawyer's subsequent career was a chequered one. He became Attorney-General, defended the Seven Bishops, was expelled the House for his conduct in the case of Sir Thomas Armstrong in 1690, and was again returned (for Cambridge University) later in the year. The beautiful seat of Highclere, Hants, came to Lord Carnarvon's family from the Sawyers. The eighth Earl of Pembroke married Margaret Sawyer, Sir Robert's only daughter and heiress, in 1684, and her father built the church at Highclere in which he lies buried. Seymour's health being conveniently re-established, he returned to the Chair on 6 May, 1678, and held office till the Pensionary Parliament was dissolved, 24 January, 1678–79.

On the meeting of Charles's third Parliament the King wished to force Sir Thomas Meres upon the House, but the Commons desired to have the services of Seymour once more. In a long dispute Seymour's re-election was refused by the King,[1] and, though the Commons did not insist upon their original choice, they elected Serjeant Gregory in preference to the King's nominee. This was the last occasion on which the Sovereign attempted to impose his own choice upon the House; and with Seymour's rejection began that period of 150 years, more or less, ending with the Speakership of Mr. Shaw Lefevre,

[1] 15 March, 1678–79.

SIR ROBERT SAWYER
1678
From a painting in the possession of the Earl of Carnarvon

during which the evolution of the non-partisan Speaker steadily proceeded. At the same time it should be noted that, though Charles failed to force Sir Thomas Meres upon the House, he was still powerful enough to procure the removal of his successor from the Judicial Bench when he gave a judgment in opposition to his personal wishes. Sir William Gregory, of How Caple, Herefordshire (a junior branch of the family of Gregory of Styvechal, in Warwickshire), like Speaker Charlton, was so removed for giving judgment against the King's dispensing power. He only sat in the Chair for four months, during which time the famous Habeas Corpus Act—the Statute which becomes more famous still when suspended—was passed into law.

Towards the close of the reign of Charles II the growth of the party system brought with it considerable expense to Parliamentary candidates, especially in the counties. Evelyn's brother George spent nearly £2000 in 1678–79 by " a most abominable custom " in carrying the county of Surrey against Lord Longford and Sir Adam Brown,[1] when most of the money was spent in eating and drinking. His colleague was Arthur Onslow, grandfather of the celebrated Speaker of the same name. In 1685 Evelyn and Onslow stood again, their opponents being Sir Adam Brown, who was stone deaf, and Sir Edward Evelyn, a cousin of the diarist. But, through a trick of the sheriff in holding the election a day before it was expected, the old members were not returned.

The new names of Whig and Tory were generally applied to the respective members of the country and the Court party at the next general election. Though

[1] Evelyn's Diary, 4 February, 1678–79.

summoned for October, 1679, Charles's fourth Parliament did not meet for the despatch of business until a year later. Sir William Williams, the Whig member for Chester, and a notable champion of the liberties of the Commons, was elected Speaker, *nemine contradicente*, on 21 October, 1680. The first Welshman to fill the Chair, he migrated from Jesus College, Oxford, the home of the leek, to Gray's Inn.[1] Luttrell tells a story of Sir Robert Peyton,[2] who had been expelled the House, going to Williams a few days after the dissolution and demanding satisfaction for a severe rebuke administered to him at the time of his expulsion. He wanted to challenge the Speaker to a duel, but thought fit to retreat in haste on the "young gentlemen of Gray's Inn" (of which Williams was a Bencher) showing signs of taking the law into their own hands on account of what they held to be Peyton's insolence to the Chair.

In this Parliament, though the Exclusion Bill was thrown out in the Lords, the Lower House set itself steadily to curtail the prerogative of the Crown. It was, in consequence, dismissed in January, 1680–81. Popular excitement ran high in London over the fate of the Bill, and the King thought it prudent to summon his fifth Parliament to meet at Oxford in the month of March. Convocation House was fitted up for the Commons, and the Lords sat in the gallery above. Williams was unanimously recalled to the Chair, but after sitting for a week the King sent it about its business, saying, "Now am I King of England, if I never was

[1] This Parliament ordered the Votes and Proceedings of the House of Commons to be printed, and in the Journal Office are preserved many of the earliest issues extant.

[2] Knight of the Shire for Middlesex.

SIR WILLIAM GREGORY
1678-9
From a painting in the Speaker's House

SIR WILLIAM WILLIAMS
1680, 1680-81
From a painting in the Speaker's House

before." Relieved of the Speakership, Williams returned to the Bar and became Solicitor-General in 1687. He died at his chambers, in Gray's Inn, in 1700, and was buried at Llansilen, Denbighshire. His portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller has recently been presented to the House by Sir Alfred Thomas, Chairman of the Welsh Parliamentary Party.

The Welsh precedent, once set, was soon followed, for in James II's only Parliament Sir John Trevor, of Brynkinalt, the ancestor of the present Lord Trevor, was unanimously called to the Chair, and at the accession of William III he was re-elected. Having been convicted of taking bribes, he was expelled the House in March, 1695, though he was allowed to remain Master of the Rolls, an office which he had held concurrently with the Speakership. In the Speaker's Portrait Gallery at Westminster there hangs his likeness, showing him to have had a decided squint, a defect which, it might be thought, would have increased the proverbial difficulty of catching the Speaker's eye. His early days had been passed in the chambers of a kinsman in the Inner Temple—Arthur Trevor. One day a visitor observed a strange-looking boy seated at a desk, and asked his name. "Oh," said old Trevor, "he is a connection of mine whom I have allowed to sit here to learn the knavish part of the law." Being addicted to high play, he became a recognised authority in gambling disputes, and amongst his fellow-gamesters he had the authority of a judge whose decision was final.

Trevor is said to have owed his promotion to the Chair to his cousin, the notorious Judge Jeffreys; and some years before, on a motion to remove Jeffreys from the

Recordership of London, Trevor's was the only voice raised in his cousin's behalf. It was probably owing to this support that he was advanced to the position of a K.C. when Jeffreys became Chief Justice. The wits of the day declared that justice might be blind, but that bribery only squinted; and when Trevor was expelled in 1695 they added that he could no longer take an oblique view of every question from the Chair. When Archbishop Tillotson chanced to meet him some little time before his disgrace, Trevor exclaimed, in an audible whisper, "I hate a fanatic in lawn sleeves"; whereon the Archbishop turned and faced him, saying, "And I hate a knave in any sleeves."

On the Bench he appears to have been as upright as he was unscrupulous in the House of Commons, and though he favoured the Protestant interest he remained faithful to James II. As Master of the Rolls he lived in Clement's Lane, then a fashionable street. On the erection of the New Law Courts, the greater part of it was demolished, but a small portion remains at the northern end. Dying there in May, 1717, he was buried in the Rolls Chapel, so unnecessarily pulled down some years ago to make way for an extension of the Public Record Office. In the museum erected on its site Trevor's arms, with an enlarged copy of his signature, taken from one of the windows of the old chapel, are still to be seen. The Trevor estate at Knightsbridge belonged to the ex-Speaker, and, as Master of the Rolls, he set the bad precedent of hearing suitors at his private house, in what was then a pleasant suburb of London.

With the Revolution which placed William III upon the throne, the history and importance of the Speaker-

SIR JOHN TREVOR
1685, 1689-90
From a painting in the Speaker's House

ship may be said to enter upon a new phase. From that date the first Commoner of the realm has occupied his proper station at the head of English gentlemen; whilst the character and consideration of his office was then, for the first time, recognised by the legislature. By I William and Mary, c. 21, he ranks next to the peers of Great Britain, both in and out of Parliament, though not until many years later did he cease to hold, concurrently with the Speakership, any office of profit under the Crown. The great Arthur Onslow, to silence any imputations of leaning towards the ministry of the day, set an example of independence almost invariably adhered to by his successors, yet, in his case, the now customary reward of a peerage after long service in the Chair was unaccountably withheld.

The Speaker of the Convention Parliament, which assembled on 22 January, 1688–89, was naturally a member of the Whig party; and though Sir Edward Seymour, the vehement Tory of earlier days, joined the Prince of Orange at Exeter in the vain hope of once more presiding over the Commons, the choice of the House fell upon Mr. Henry Powle, the son of Henry Powle, of Shottesbrooke, and member for the royal borough of Windsor. Powle had identified himself with the opponents of the Court in the reign of Charles II, and was more than suspected of having been in the pay of Barillon; but his tact and discretion caused him to become the trusted adviser of William, who, on the first convenient opportunity, conferred on him the Mastership of the Rolls.

"I will not invade prerogative, neither will I consent to the infringement of the least liberty of my country,"

were the proud words in which he sought to define his Parliamentary position; but the proudest day of his life was when, on 13 February, 1688–89, he stood at the head of the assembled Commons in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, Lord Halifax, the Speaker of the Lords, and the peers facing him, and heard the Declaration of Right asserted prior to the tender of the crown to William. In the magnificent procession which paraded the streets of London to proclaim the King and Queen, the Speaker in his coach took precedence even of the Earl Marshal and others of the great nobility. At the dissolution Powle lost his seat on petition and returned to the administration of justice at the Rolls, maintaining his wonted independence when he refused to attend the Lords at their pleasure, declaring that he was an assistant to, but not an attendant upon, the Upper House. He did not live to see Trevor's expulsion from the Chair, having died at Quenington, in Gloucestershire, in 1692. On his tombstone is inscribed the following epitaph, possibly, according to the practice of the times, his own composition :—

> " Regi et regno fidelissimus,
> Aequi rectique arbiter integerrimus,
> Pius, probus, temperans, prudens,
> Virtutum omnium
> Exemplar magnum."

The next Speaker after Trevor's fall was a man of an altogether different mould and of a different political complexion. The rise of his family was somewhat singular. Richard Foley, and his son Thomas after him, made a fortune in Stourbridge by selling nails. Thomas Foley bought Witley, in Worcestershire, for his eldest son, and Stoke Edith, the old home of the Lingens, for his second son,

G. Kneller Eques pinxit
Gu. Vertue Lond. Sculp 1707
HENRY POWLE Esqr
Speaker of the HOUSE of COMMONS & MASTER of the ROLLS.
MDCXC.

HENRY POWLE
1688-9
From a print

Paul. In 1679 Paul Foley became member for the city of Hereford, but, though a Tory, he was not a courtier, and he supported the Revolution of 1688–89. Only a year before his elevation to the Chair he showed his independent spirit, in Grand Committee on the state of the nation, and used remarkably plain language in stating his personal opinions on the King's veto. "I believe," he said, "the King hath a negative voice, and it is necessary that it should be so. But if this be made use of to turn by all bills and things the Court likes not, it is misused; for such a prerogative is committed to him for the good of us all."[1] Roger North called him "a factious lawyer, very busy in ferreting out musty old repositories," which was another way of stating that he had a great knowledge of precedents. North was also responsible for the cryptic utterance attributed to Foley, that—"Things would never go well in England till forty heads flew for it." In 1695 he was put into the Speaker's chair in opposition to Sir Thomas Littleton, the nominee of the Court, and there he remained till within a year of his death. Foley has been styled the first non-partisan Speaker, and, though this is not a strictly accurate description, his tenure of the office undoubtedly marks a stage in the evolution of the office.

Paul Foley, like Speaker Phelips, was a mighty builder in his day. Stoke Edith, one of the best-proportioned country houses in England, a thoughtful mingling of brick and stone, was in part designed by Wren, who appears to have been consulted on most of the important houses built at the close of the seventeenth century. The harmony and proportion of Foley's house

[1] Porritt's *Unreformed House of Commons*, 1903, Vol. I, p. 444.

were somewhat marred by alterations carried out by the brothers Adam, when the windows were taken out and replaced by others less suitable to the original design. Sir James Thornhill, who was entrusted with the decoration of the great hall, introduced an allegorical figure of constitutional liberty, with Foley's own portrait in a contemplative attitude.[1]

On the occasion of Foley's first election to the Chair, Sir Thomas Littleton, the candidate of the Whigs, was defeated by 179 votes to 146; but in 1698, after his rival's retirement, having been again put forward by the Junto, he was chosen Speaker in William's third Parliament by a large majority. Shortly before the meeting of the new House in December, 1698, a curious pamphlet, *Considerations upon the Choice of a Speaker of the House of Commons in the Approaching Session,* was published by the Tories with a view to excluding Littleton. His appointment, like Sir Edward Seymour's, was a reaction from the custom of promoting lawyers, the House once more preferring to have a country gentleman to preside over their deliberations.

Sir Thomas Littleton, who was the youngest son of a poor baronet, had, however, served an apprenticeship to trade, having been trained in business habits from his youth. He is said to have been recommended to William III by the Duke of Shrewsbury, the " favourite

[1] Paul Foley was the ancestor of the present Lord Foley. He married Mary, daughter of John Lane, an alderman of the City of London, and dying on 11 November, 1699, was buried at Stoke Edith. The Speaker's nephew was one of the twelve emergency peers created by Queen Anne in 1712 to secure a Tory majority in the House of Lords. When they made their first appearance at Westminster, Lord Wharton ironically asked them if they desired to give their votes singly, or, as a jury, through their foreman.

STOKE EDITH, HEREFORDSHIRE. BUILT BY SPEAKER FOLEY

PAUL FOLEY
1694-95, 1695
From a miniature in the possession of Paul Henry Foley, Esq., at Stoke Edith

of the nation," according to Swift, and a statesman whose biography deserves to be written at length. Although he had but one eye, his political vision was remarkably clear, and at critical moments in the lives of both William III and Anne the Duke rendered invaluable service to the Crown.

The sessions of 1698–99 and 1700 proved to be full of humiliations for the Court. Though the ministry had succeeded in securing the election of a Whig Speaker, the new House of Commons contained a composite majority made up of avowed Tories and members who were opposed to a forward military policy. Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax, who must not be confounded with the celebrated Trimmer, had carried all before him in the last Parliament, but he now found himself powerless to guide or control the deliberations of the House. In addition to demanding the reduction of the Dutch guards, the Commons became inquisitive in the matter of royal grants, and proposed to appoint Commissioners to inquire into the manner in which the forfeited Irish lands had been conferred on William's personal favourites. In order to force their Bill through the House of Lords the Commons deliberately tacked it on to a Bill granting the Land Tax. And though William reluctantly gave his assent to the measure, rather than throw the Constitution into the melting-pot, he prorogued Parliament [1] without making a speech from the throne, and wrote to a friend :—

" This has been the most dismal session I ever had. The members have separated in great disorder and after many extravagances. Unless one had been present, he could have no notion of their intrigues : one cannot even describe them."

[1] 11 April, 1700.

Party government was still in its infancy in 1700, and the prolonged quarrel between the two Houses having engendered a dangerous spirit in the Commons, the way was paved for a better understanding between the King and the acknowledged leaders of the Tory party. Thus was established, almost unconsciously, the general principle, ever since accepted, that ministers who cannot command a majority in the House of Commons cannot cling to office without being discredited in the country.

When his fourth Parliament was about to assemble in February, 1700–1, William intimated to Littleton, who lacked the physique necessary to the efficient performance of the duties of the Chair, his desire that he should give way to Harley, and, with the prompt compliance of a courtier, the late Speaker absented himself from the House on the day of meeting, to be rewarded with the valuable office of Treasurer of the Navy, a post which he retained till his death, unshaken by all the efforts made to remove him. On this occasion Harley was proposed by Sir Edward Seymour, the ex-Speaker of the Pensionary Parliament, but the House was by no means unanimous in his favour, 249 members voting for him and 129 against him. Bishop Burnet, who knew Littleton well, wrote of him earlier in his career :—

" I happened in looking for a house to fall accidentally on the next house to Sir Thomas Littleton, knowing nothing concerning him. But I soon found that he was one of the considerablest men in the nation. He was at the head of the opposition that was made to the Court, and living constantly in town, he was exactly informed of all that passed. He came to have an entire confidence in me, so that for six years together we were seldom two days without spending some hours together. I was by

SIR THOMAS LITTLETON
1698
From a print

this means let into all their secrets, and indeed without the assistance I had from him I could never have seen so clearly into affairs as I did. We argued all the matters that he perceived were to be moved in the House of Commons till he thought he was a master of all that could be said on the subject, and it was observed of him that in all debates in the House of Commons he reserved himself to the conclusion, and what he spoke commonly determined the matter."

Burnet and Littleton were living at the time referred to—the latter end of the reign of Charles II—near the Plough Inn, which was on the south side of Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and convenient to the Rolls Chapel, where Burnet was then preacher. Manning gives a slightly different version of Burnet's estimate of the Speaker.[1] Burnet, however, was wrong in saying that Littleton was the first Speaker who had not been brought up in the profession of the law. Littleton had a profound antipathy to the members of the long robe in Parliament, and in the debates upon the Bill for allowing counsel to prisoners in cases of high treason, and the impeachment of Sir John Fenwick, who had asked for further time to produce witnesses, he argued, as a private member, as follows :—

" Here ye shall have cunning lawyers defending an impeachment. I hope I shall not degrade your members to argue against lawyers ; but when an impeachment is by gentlemen of his own quality, I think a cause is as well tried without counsel, and I would disagree with the Lords." He further observed, in the same contemptuous strain : " It may be the counsel have a mind to another fee."

[1] Supplement to the *History of My Own Time*, edited by Miss Foxcroft, 1902, p. 485.

He was a stout party man, and from his place in the House he declared that the principle which ever guided his vote was the party from whom the proposition emanated. "For my part, I have a way how to guide my vote always in the House, which is to vote contrary to what our enemies without doors wish." Such slavish adherence to party ties carries joy to the heart of the party whips, who dislike above everything the "independent" member, who watches the opportunity to snatch a momentary notoriety by stabbing his own side in the back.

Littleton was again put forward for the Chair on December 30, 1701, when 212 members voted in his favour and 216 against him, the closest contest on record. Harley was then re-elected without further opposition. Like Sir Thomas More and "tough old Coke," Harley's principal triumphs were achieved in other spheres than that of the Chair of the Commons, so that it is unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the career of this nimblest of politicians. Belauded by Pope and beloved of Swift, this brilliant statesman may be said to have embarked on a ministerial career whilst still Speaker of the Commons, for he was Secretary of State for the Northern Department for some months before he quitted the Chair for the third and last time.

By birth and education a Whig, by imperceptible stages he developed into the leader of the Tory and Church party. On becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer,[1] he virtually filled the position of Prime Minister, and when, at the general election of 1710, the Tory party had a large majority at the polls he was all but supreme. In King William's time, when he had only £500 a year,

[1] In 1710.

ROBERT HARLEY
1700-1, 1701, 1702
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

he is said to have spent half this sum in employing clerks to copy out for him treaties and official papers, so that members were almost afraid to speak before him. His enemies said that he had spies and inspectors in every public office. In contrast to his great rival Bolingbroke, who fascinated the House as much by his handsome appearance as by his neatly turned speeches, Harley's physical proportions were unimposing; his features were homely, and there was little that was impressive in his voice or carriage. "Can it be true," said M. Le Sac, a celebrated *maître de danse*, "that Mr. Harley has been made an Earl and Lord Treasurer? I wonder what the devil the Queen can see in him! He was a pupil of mine for two years, and a greater dunce I never taught."

In 1701 he was elected Speaker by 120 votes over Sir Richard Onslow; on the second occasion he only beat Sir Thomas Littleton by four; and in 1702 there is no mention in the Journals of his re-election, the Clerks of the House having neglected to minute the proceedings of the first two days of the session. Harley is said to have been the inventor of the newspaper press as an engine of party warfare, and, apart from his political eminence, he deserves to be gratefully remembered for the literary taste displayed in the formation of the splendid library, of which the MS. portion is now in the British Museum, it having been acquired for the nation for the small sum of £10,000.

On the meeting of Queen Anne's second Parliament, which became the first Parliament of Great Britain by Proclamation dated 29 April, 1707, there was a furious party contest for the Chair. The Tory candidate was Mr. William Bromley, of Baginton, who was to have

his revenge later on, and the chosen of the Whigs was plain Mr. John Smith, M.P. for Andover, who carried the day by 248 votes to 205. Mr. Smith came of a respectable Hampshire family, and previous to his elevation to the Chair he had acted as a party whip. His close friendship with Godolphin also stood him in good stead.

The Scotch members sat at Westminster for the first time on 23 October, 1707, and when the ministerial crisis which drove Harley from office early in the next year necessitated a reconstitution of the ministry, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was conferred upon the Speaker. Mr. Smith only held the post for two years, and, though he remained a member of the House until his death in 1723, his subsequent career was uneventful. He subsided into the less influential but more lucrative sinecure of a Tellership of the Exchequer. On one occasion he was indiscreet enough to inform the House that the debts of the Civil List, then stated to be £400,000, had not amounted to half that sum two months before the estimates were made. The deficiency had apparently arisen from excessive disbursements on account of secret service. Swift had a thrust at the ex-Speaker when he wrote in the *Invitation to Dismal*—

> " Wine can clear up Godolphin's cloudy face
> And fill Jack Smith with hopes to keep his place."

And keep it he did, until the accession of George I dispelled all danger of removal. As an orthodox Whig, he supported Walpole in opposition to the Stanhope Administration, and one of his last public utterances was on a curious motion to close the House of Lords against Commoners for the future.[1]

[1] Speaker Smith's portrait is in the Speaker's collection at Westminster, and his family is represented at the present day by Mr. Assheton Smith, of Vaynol, near Bangor.

JOHN SMITH
1705, 1707
From a drawing in the National Portrait Gallery

Anne's third Parliament was presided over by Sir Richard Onslow, a descendant of the man of the same name who was Speaker in 1566. The portrait of the Speaker of 1708–10 has been drawn by the infinitely greater Arthur Onslow, the third of the family to fill the Chair.

" Tall and very thin, not well shaped, and with a face exceeding plain, yet there was a certain sweetness with a dignity in his countenance, and so much of life and spirit in it, that no one who saw him ever thought him of a disagreeable aspect. His carriage was universally obliging, and he was of the most winning behaviour that ever I saw. There was an ease and openness in his address, that even at first sight gave him the heart of every man he spoke to. He had always something to say that was agreeable to everybody, and used to take as much pleasure in telling a story to a man's advantage, as others generally do to the contrary. It was this temper that made him so fit for reconciling differences between angry people, an office he frequently and readily undertook and seldom failed of succeeding in." [1]

So far it might be thought that Sir Richard possessed every qualification for the post, but less partial judges perceived in " stiff Dick," as he was irreverently called by the Tories, an unfortunate propensity to quarrelsomeness which led him on more than one occasion to challenge a fellow-member to a duel. He fought Mr. Oglethorpe, a young man of twenty-two, for something he had said in the course of a debate, and he was only restrained by an order of the House from prosecuting another affair of honour with Sir E. Seymour.

[1] Historical Manuscripts Commission Report on the MSS. of the Earl of Onslow.

At the time of his election many would have preferred Sir Peter King, who, missing the Chair, attained the Woolsack in the next reign.

Paul Jodrell, the Clerk of the House, was also suggested as being the most competent adviser in matters of precedent and procedure, much as the late Sir Thomas Erskine May's name was put forward in recent years as the greatest authority on Parliamentary history and the mainstay of every Speaker with whom he acted. "Stiff Dick" found himself in the uncomfortable position of being confronted with no less than three ex-Speakers, two of them sitting, comparatively negligible quantities, on the ministerial benches—Littleton and Smith, and the redoubtable Harley on the Opposition side. Lord Shaftesbury, writing in November, 1708, when Onslow was quite new to the Chair, said: "The late Speaker beset the old one; and he will have, I fear, a hard task, if this be not an easy session."

Whatever his shortcomings, Richard Onslow ingratiated himself at Court. King William shortly before his death called him into his closet and "bade him continue the honest man he had always found him." Anne made him a Privy Councillor.[1] George I made him Chancellor of the Exchequer and a peer, and on his resigning the Chancellorship he succeeded in getting himself made Teller of the Exchequer for life, the first instance of that appointment being conferred for that period. His manner in the Chair was somewhat imperious. When the House went up to the Lords to demand judgment against Dr. Sacheverell, every complaint took the

[1] Said to be the last favour which Lord Godolphin ever procured from the Queen.

SIR RICHARD ONSLOW
1708
From a painting in the Speaker's House

form of a threat : " My Lords, if you do not immediately order your Black Rod to " do this or that, " I will return to the House of Commons at once."

With the return of Harley to office at the head of a solid Tory majority, and a Parliament strongly attached to the Church, Mr. William Bromley, who had been disappointed of the Chair on a previous occasion, was unanimously chosen on 25 November, 1710.[1] A perfect type of the English country gentleman, Bromley was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, and at the time of his election to the Chair he represented the University. After taking his degree he made the tour of the Continent and published an account of his travels. The title-page shows that he considered printing an act of condescension :[2] " Remarks on the Grand Tour of France and Italy lately performed by a person of quality, 1692." In the Doge's Palace at Genoa he observed with approval " an excellent method for freedom in voting," and was in advance of his time and party in commending the ballot boxes which rendered it " impossible the suffrage of any particular person should be known." From Genoa he proceeded to Rome, where he was received in audience by the Pope. " In the evening I was admitted to the honour of kissing the Pope's slipper, who, though he knew me to be a Protestant, gave me his blessing, and, like a wise man, said nothing about religion."

He was sceptical as to the genuineness of the Sancta Scala at St. John Lateran, and was relieved to hear from

[1] For his speech on taking office see Boyer's *Political State of England.*

[2] Townsend, *Memoirs of the House of Commons,* 1844, second edition, p. 178.

one of the cardinals that they were not the actual stairs ascended by the Saviour, but as they were generally considered to be so it was not thought advisable to undeceive the devout. From Rome he went to Florence. He was delighted to see the portraits of King Charles and King James, but he would not permit himself to speak of King William, except as the "Prince of Orange."

His political opponents professed to believe that he must be a Papist and Jacobite at heart, on account of his having kissed the Pope's toe; and, in consequence of the derision cast by the Whigs on the casual impressions of a fairly intelligent traveller, he withdrew from circulation such copies as remained in the bookseller's hands. A second edition appeared, without Bromley's permission, just at the time when he was first proposed for the Chair. To this was added a fictitious table of contents, attributed, though we believe erroneously, to Walpole, turning Bromley's observations into ridicule.[1]

During his Speakership his house at Baginton, in Warwickshire, was burnt to the ground, and the story goes that he was informed of the catastrophe whilst sitting in the Chair, the news having been brought to town by special messenger. Very calmly, and without quitting the Chair, he is said to have given directions for the immediate rebuilding of his ruined home. This was done, and Queen Anne came to see it and planted a cedar in the garden. On the new house the inscription "Phœnix Resurgens" was placed, but none the less it was burnt down again in 1889, and nothing now remains of it but

[1] Both these little books are now rare and there is no copy of either of them in the library of the House.

WILLIAM BROMLEY
1710
From a print

the outside walls with the inscription, which has not yet been made good.

That Bromley was held in esteem by the House at large is apparent from its having adjourned for six whole days on the occasion of the death of his only son, " out of respect to the father and to give him time both to perform the funeral rites and to indulge his just affliction." He was offered, and accepted, a seat in the Government before the dissolution of August, 1713, and on quitting the Chair for the Treasury Bench he became the recognised leader of the Tory party in the House of Commons. At Harley's instigation he wrote to Sir Thomas Hanmer, asking him to allow himself to be nominated for the Chair in the new Parliament. Having secured his main object, he sought to ensure the re-election of his chaplain, Dr. Pelham. The manœuvre was not successful, and history does not record whether another and minor request weighed with his successor. Dating from Whitehall, 22 September, 1710, Bromley had written to Hanmer :—

" You'll smile at the transition from chaplain to coach horses. I have a pair that drew my great coach, and believe you cannot be better fitted, and I offer them to you before I dispose of them. One especially is a very fine horse, and better than sixteen hands high. You shall have him or them on reasonable terms."

With the death of Queen Anne Mr. Bromley's official career practically came to a close. To the end of his life he came out on Parliamentary field days with a set oration against the Whigs, emphatically denouncing such evils as Hanoverian alliances, the maintenance of a standing army, and the Septennial Act. He died at Baginton,

in the summer of 1732, in his sixty-ninth year, "a not unfavourable specimen of the Tory squire in politics, having sat in twelve Parliaments and under four Sovereigns." His library was fortunately saved from the fire in 1889, as was the fine service of plate used by him as Speaker. There is a portrait of him at Westminster, and another in the possession of his descendant, Mr. William Bromley-Davenport, late M.P. for Macclesfield.

The last Speaker of Queen Anne's reign was Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Shakespearean commentator, and the head of a family which had been settled in the Welsh marches since the reign of Henry III. At the early age of twenty-one he married the widowed Duchess of Grafton, who had been first wedded to one of Charles II's illegitimate sons at the tender age of twelve. Educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford, he entered the House of Commons as member for Thetford, where the Grafton interest was no doubt paramount, and took up his abode in Pall Mall at a house on the south side of the street. He soon made his mark in debate, and in a letter of Lord Berkeley of Stratton, written in 1712, he was said to "outshine all in the House."

In the course of the next year Swift, who, it was rumoured, occasionally helped him in the composition of his speeches, confided to Stella the opinion that "he was the most considerable man in the House of Commons." Though of generally Tory proclivities, he was looked upon as somewhat of a waverer about this time, and, after he had refused office under Harley, from a growing distrust of his policy, that astute minister desired to relegate him to the Chair, where he thought that he

would be more safely occupied than in playing the rôle of a Parliamentary free-lance. But before this could be contrived the debates on the Commercial Treaty with France, arising out of the eighth and ninth Articles of the ill-starred Treaty of Utrecht, gave Hanmer the chance of his life.

The Articles were the work of Bolingbroke even more than of Harley, and were designed in the interests of free trade with France, at the expense of Spain, Portugal, and Italy. They proposed concessions in the importation of French wines to the certain injury of the Portuguese trade; whilst the silk and woollen manufactures of France were to enter England free. A revolt of English manufacturers and traders at once took place, and the cry of "Treat the foreigner as he treats us!" was immediately raised. Petitions against the Treaty poured in, and for a month nothing else was talked of in London. This was the age of pamphlets, and public interest in the subject was stimulated and inflamed by the appearance of two rival periodicals, one, *The Mercator, or Commerce Retrieved*, written by Daniel Defoe, upholding the free trade clauses of the Treaty; and the other, *The British Merchant, or Commerce Preserved*, (said to have been written by General Stanhope who led the opposition in the House of Commons), which was strongly in favour of a protective tariff. A tariff reform debate in the reign of Queen Anne may seem something of an anomaly to modern readers, but the strenuous party fight which took place on 14 May, prior to the introduction of the Government Bill to make the Articles effectual, raised the whole question of free imports and the imposition of a commercial tariff with France.

General Stanhope quoted the preamble of an earlier tariff concluded between Louis XIV and Charles II in 1664, which declared :—

" That it has been found by long experience that the importing of French wines, brandy, linen, salt and paper, and other commodities of the growth, product, and manufactures of the territories and dominions of the French King, has much exhausted the treasure of this nation, lessened the value of the native commodities and manufactures thereof, and caused great detriment to the Kingdom in general."

At this point Speaker Bromley interposed, saying " that there was no such thing in that Act," but, being found to be mistaken after the Clerk of the House had read the original words, General Stanhope was allowed to proceed with his arguments, to show the disadvantages of an open trade with France.[1] When the Bill went into Committee it occupied the House for five whole days, and Hanmer, who had originally favoured the scheme of the Government, made an elaborate speech against it. He said that though he had given his vote for the bringing in of the Bill, having in the interval weighed and considered the allegations of the petitioning merchants and traders, he had been convinced that the passing of the Bill would inflict great prejudice to the home woollen and silk manufactures, increase the number of the poor, and ultimately affect the land.

" While he had the honour to sit in the House he would never be blindly led by any ministry ; neither,

[1] Boyer says, in relating this incident, " He " (General Stanhope) " and some other members animadverted with some vehemence on the Speaker's mistake." (*Political State of Great Britain*, Vol. V, p. 370.)

on the other hand, was he biased by what might weigh with some men, viz. the fear of losing their elections. The principles upon which he acted were the interests of his country and the conviction of his judgment, and upon those considerations alone he must oppose the Bill."

This speech made a great impression upon the House, and when the division was taken, "near eleven at night and after candles had been brought in," the Government was defeated by the narrow majority of nine, and the Bill was killed. Only one of the four members for the City of London voted for it; the other three and the members for Westminster voted for its rejection. The London drapers, mercers, and weavers were overjoyed at the result, and Hanmer became for a time a popular idol. Bonfires and illuminations expressed the general satisfaction on the news becoming known.[1] The coolness which ensued between Sir Thomas Hanmer and the ministry was temporarily patched up when he consented to take the Chair in the new Parliament. The precarious session of 1714, when the chances of the Stuart and the Hanoverian dynasties were nearly equally balanced, gave the Speaker an opportunity of testifying to his regard for the Protestant succession.

The country party declared that this was in danger under Her Majesty's Government, and when ministers attempted to shelve an inconvenient topic by moving the

[1] A very interesting letter from the Tory point of view, describing the preliminary debate in the House on 14 May, will be found in the Wentworth correspondence, pp. 234, 235. Peter Wentworth, writing to his brother, Lord Strafford, who had negotiated the Treaty of Utrecht, states that he was an attentive listener to the debate from one o'clock till ten at night.

previous question, the Speaker, speaking in Committee of the whole House, baffled the attempt in a remarkable speech, in which he said that "he was sorry to see that endeavours were used to stop their mouths, but he was of opinion that this was the proper, and perhaps the only, time for patriots to speak; that though, for his own part, he had all the honour and respect imaginable for Her Majesty's ministers, he felt that he owed more to his country than to any minister; that, in the debate, so much had been said to prove that the succession was in danger, and so little to make out the contrary, that he could not but believe the first." Henceforth he became the recognised leader of the Hanoverian Tories, or, as they were nicknamed, the Whimsicals. With the death of George I the last chance of the restoration of his friends to political power disappeared, and Hanmer withdrew from public life to pursue his Shakespearean studies.[1]

[1] As recently as July, 1907, Speaker Hanmer's plate was brought to the hammer at Christie's, when it realised high prices.

I. Allen, delt. *W. Bond, sculpt.*

SIR THOMAS HANMER

1713-4

From a print

CHAPTER VII

THE HOUSES OF HANOVER AND SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA. RISE OF THE SYSTEM OF CABINET GOVERNMENT, WITH MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PARLIAMENT

Seventeen Speakers

George I—
- Spencer Compton

George II—
- Arthur Onslow

George III—
- John Cust
- Fletcher Norton
- Charles Wolfran Cornwall
- William Wyndham Grenville

George IV—
- Henry Addington
- John Mitford
- Charles Abbot
- Charles Manners-Sutton

William IV—
- James Abercromby

Victoria—
- Charles Shaw-Lefevre
- John Evelyn Denison
- Henry Bouverie William Brand
- Arthur Wellesley Peel
- William Court Gully

Edward VII and George V—
- James William Lowther

WITH the accession of George I and the rout of the Tory party the Speakership acquired a permanent character hitherto unknown in its annals. Whilst the House of Lords was the most compact body in the State, Sir Robert Walpole, after 1721, taught the nation to look upon the House of Commons as the real seat of power in the legislature, with the result that a corresponding increase took

place in the importance and dignity of the Speaker's office. No longer to be regarded as a stepping-stone to rapid legal preferment, the Chair in the early days of the eighteenth century was filled more often than not by men with little or no legal training. It has been shown that in the Middle Ages instances occurred in which a Speaker was re-elected on three, four, and even five occasions; but when the House of Commons knew but one president during an entire reign (and history repeated itself under George II), new records of long service in the Chair were established which have never since been surpassed or even equalled.

An aristocrat by birth, Sir Spencer Compton, the third son of the Earl of Northampton, came of a good Tory stock, but in early life he deserted to the Whigs. This "most solemn, formal man in the world," according to Horace Walpole, entered the House as member for Eye in 1698, became Speaker in March, 1715, was re-elected in 1722 (from which date he combined the then lucrative office of Paymaster-General with the duties of the Chair), and was raised to the Peerage as Lord Wilmington on the accession of George II. The new King wished to make him his Prime Minister, but Walpole having promised the Queen £100,000 a year from Parliament, whereas Wilmington had only ventured to propose £60,000, the arrangement fell through. But on Walpole's fall and nominal replacement in 1742, he achieved his heart's desire and became First Lord of the Treasury.

Though not a strong Speaker, Compton could on occasion administer sharp reproof. When a member once called upon him to make the House quiet, declaring that he had a right to be heard, he answered, "No, sir, you

G. Kneller, pinxt *I. Faber, sculpt, 1734*

SIR SPENCER COMPTON
1714-5, 1722
From a print

have a right to speak, but the House has a right to judge whether it will hear you." [1] Though often called Prime Minister, he was never so in the sense that Walpole was. Carteret, who is said to have been the only peer of Cabinet rank who could talk to the first two Georges in their native tongue, was the chief minister. In this connection it will be remembered that the late Mr. W. H. Smith, when leader of the House, was First Lord of the Treasury, though never Prime Minister. Lord Wilmington seems to have excited in an uncommon degree the mirth and ridicule of the wits of the day. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in his "New Ode to a great number of great men newly made," wrote :—

> "See yon old, dull important Lord
> Who at the longed-for money board
> Sits first, but does not lead."

And Lord Hervey, the "Sporus" of Pope, said of him :—

> "Let Wilmington, with grave contracted brow,
> Red tape and wisdom at the Council show,
> Sleep in the Senate, in the circle bow."

The "Broad-bottomed Administration," a remarkably aristocratic body, seeing that there were five Dukes, a Marquis, and an Earl in it, replaced Lord Carteret's, and was itself upset on Pelham's death. An arch-mediocrity in office, Lord Wilmington could make an effective speech on ceremonial occasions, and a jest of his on the Duke of Newcastle deserves to be remembered as much as the gibes of his political opponents: "The Duke always loses half an hour in the morning, which he is running after the rest of the day, without being able to overtake it." During the whole of his official career this "transient,

[1] Hatsell's *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons*, 1818, Vol. II, p. 108.

embarrassed phantom " lived in St. James's Square, at a house erroneously supposed to have been Nell Gwynne's, and now merged in the Army and Navy Club. It had originally been built for Moll Davis, a young actress and dancer, whose professional career presented many similar features to Nelly's own. Naive and flippant on the stage, what she lacked in beauty she made up for in agility, and her antics on the stage made the pulse of Pepys beat quicker as he sat in the pit of Old Drury marking time with his foot as he applauded the measure. Lord Wilmington inherited the house from his mother, Mary, Countess of Northampton. Its last occupier was Lord De Mauley, until it was pulled down to make way for the Army and Navy Club.

The Speaker's next-door neighbour in the Square, at No. 21, was " Beau Colyear," Lord Portmore, who married James II's ugly mistress, Katherine Sidley; and before he came there Arabella Churchill, another of James's favourites, lived in the house. Lord Portmore was a great patron of horse-racing, even before the foundation of the Jockey Club in the middle of the eighteenth century. Lord Wilmington died in July, 1743, and was buried at Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, one of the most charming country houses in the Midlands. Having never been married, his titles became extinct, and his estates passed to his brother, from whom the present Marquis of Northampton is descended. There is a good portrait of Speaker Compton, by Sir Peter Lely, at Westminster.

Throughout the whole of the next reign, during Walpole's last administration and those of Lord Carteret,

ARTHUR ONSLOW

1727-8, 1734-5, 1741, 1747, 1754

From a painting possibly by Hysing in the National Portrait Gallery

the Pelhams, the Duke of Newcastle, the elder Pitt, and the Coalition Ministry of 1757, the Chair was filled, in five successive Parliaments, by the great Arthur Onslow, the third of his family to be so honoured, and unquestionably one of the most distinguished Speakers the House has ever known. As from 1720 to 1727 he represented Guildford, and from 1728 to 1761 the county of Surrey, in the Whig interest, at the time of his retirement in the latter year there can have been very few members of the House who sat in it when he was first called to the Chair.

The story goes that having in early life conceived a great desire to become Speaker, Sir Robert Walpole wrote reminding him that " the road to that station lay through the gates of St. James's " ; but whether or not Onslow owed his selection to the direct interest of the Crown, no better choice could have been made. He was first returned for Guildford at a bye-election, and in the course of the same year, 1720, he married. He embraced, as a matter of course, the orthodox Whig creed, which professed to regard the passing of the Septennial Act as coincident with a Constitutional millennium.

This measure, although often threatened with radical curtailment of its provisions, still sets a convenient limit to the activities of a Parliament, and when Onslow made his appearance at Westminster this great constitutional landmark had not outrun its first allotted term.

The ideal Speaker, that was to be, chose for his London home a modest dwelling in Leicester Street, a narrow thoroughfare converging, at its upper end, upon Lisle Street. Despite its proximity to the abode of Royalty (in the person of the Prince of Wales at Leicester House,

where the Empire Theatre now stands), it can never have been a very cheerful situation, and, at the present day, having been long since deserted by private residents of any and every rank in life, it is a singularly unattractive row of business premises. Probably no district in the West End has so changed for the worse, from the residential point of view, as the once fashionable Leicester Fields, to give it the name usually attributed to it in the reign of the first and second George.

Yet Onslow lived there for no less than thirty years, only quitting it in 1752 to take up his abode at the finest and largest house in Soho Square. No. 20 stands on the site of Old Falconbergh House, built at the end of the seventeenth century by the head of the Bellasis family.

It has a handsome façade in the Square (reproduced in this volume), and the London County Council would be well advised to place a memorial tablet on its walls, if only for the sake of an interesting link between the Commonwealth and the reign of George III.

Mary, Lady Falconbergh, was Oliver Cromwell's daughter, and is said to have borne a striking resemblance to her father. Marrying in his lifetime, she did not die until 1713, so that Arthur Onslow might well have remembered her. Sir Thomas Frankland and Mr. Anthony Duncombe also lived at No. 20, Onslow's immediate predecessor there being the Lord Tylney for whom Colin Campbell, the author of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, built Wanstead House in the Essex marshes.

In its original state Falconbergh House, to give it its earliest name, must have been well suited to the holding of the Speaker's levees, but the interior, with the exception of one room on the first floor decorated with coats

SPEAKER ARTHUR ONSLOW'S HOUSE IN SOHO SQUARE. (No. 20, FORMERLY FALCONBERG HOUSE)

of arms and a highly enriched ceiling, was practically gutted by Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell in adapting it to business purposes. The fine staircase and a quantity of tapestry were then removed, but the well-proportioned front fortunately escaped alteration. The Duke of Argyll and Lord Bradford were other occupiers after the Speaker, and, before it was consecrated to jam and pickles, this historic mansion was used for a time as D'Almaine's pianoforte showrooms.

Next door, now No. 21 in the square and the corner house of Sutton Street, was the notorious "White House." Some years after Onslow had left the neighbourhood it became a den of infamy unexampled in the annals of disreputable London, thus affording another instance of the vicissitudes which surround the former abodes of the most impeccable citizens.

The positive identification of Speaker Onslow's house has only been arrived at after an exhaustive examination of the parochial rate-books. Much confusion has prevailed in the minds of even recent writers on Soho respecting the actual sites of houses in the square formerly occupied by distinguished men. The statement that Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell and the Dutch adventurer Ripperda lived at No. 20 is as inaccurate as the one frequently put forward that Onslow's mansion was one and the same with the "White House" of evil memory. As a matter of fact, Sir Cloudesley lived on the west side of the square and Ripperda on the north, in a house represented by Nos. 10 and 10A of the modern numbering.

When first called to the Chair, Onslow confessed to feeling apprehensive at being raised to so dangerous

a height, saying that greater men before him had tried their abilities in the same station and had found the eminence too high for them. He was then only thirty-six, a comparatively early age for a Speaker, and had sat in the House for rather less than eight years. When his re-election was proposed in 1747 he felt some compunction at accepting a further term of office, telling the House that, " painful as the situation [of Speaker] is, at any time, and worn as I am, perhaps, with its labours, since honourable gentlemen seem inclined to try my poor abilities once more . . . I do not think it decent in me to dispute their commands. I therefore resign myself to the judgment of the House, which has a right to dispose of me here in whatever manner it may think proper." And, pausing on the step of the Chair, he added, much after the manner of his immediate predecessors, " It is my duty to let honourable gentlemen know that, before I go any further, they have it in their power to call me back to the seat from whence I came, and to choose some other person to fill this place."

And not until every member then present had cried out, " No, no," did he consent to preside over the deliberations of the House for the fourth time. Onslow was the first in the long catalogue to realise the supreme importance of the independence and impartiality of the Chair. Whereas most of his predecessors had been pluralists or expectant office-holders, he raised the character of the Speakership by resigning the lucrative office of Treasurer of the Navy and contenting himself with the modest income derived from fees on private bills. Hatsell, who went to the Table of the House while Onslow was still in the Chair, wrote of him, in

connection with the rules then obtaining, that the Speaker endeavoured to preserve order in debate with great strictness, yet always with civility and courtesy, saying that he had often heard, as a young man, from old and experienced members, that nothing tended more to throw power into the hands of the Administration than the neglect of or departure from these rules. That he, Onslow, was of opinion that they had been instituted by our ancestors as a check on the action of ministers, and as a protection to the minority against the arbitrary exercise of power. There can be little doubt that Speaker Onslow's rigid adherence to duty, and his detachment from political office, notwithstanding some divergence from his standard on the part of his immediate successors, paved the way for the wholly non-partisan Speaker evolved during the nineteenth century, and that the methods introduced by him have contributed to the shaping of the system of Party Government as understood at the present day. His demeanour in the Chair is said to have been firm but impartial, his voice clear and impressive, and his temper imperturbable. By way of contrast this grave and dignified man, when released from his official duties, would steal away from Westminster to enjoy his pipe and glass *incognito* in the chimney-corner of the "Jew's Harp," a famous tavern and bowling alley in Marylebone Fields, the site of which is now merged in the Regent's Park. As the great man was driving to the House of Commons one day in his state coach his identity was accidentally revealed to the landlord, who insisted, on the occasion of the Speaker's next visit, on treating him with the deference due to his exalted position. But his secret having been

betrayed, Marylebone and its diversions knew the First Commoner no more.

During the forty-one years which Arthur Onslow passed at Westminster he witnessed great changes, not only in the composition and in the manners of the House, but in the actual conditions of Parliamentary life. Speaker Onslow the third saw the development of the modern system of Cabinet Government coupled with ministerial responsibility to Parliament. He saw the elder Pitt make his first entrance on the Parliamentary stage,[1] and during the most glorious period of the great Commoner's career—those two short years in which Clive laid the foundations of our Indian Empire, and Wolfe, at the cost of his life, added Canada to the English dominions beyond the sea—he was still in the Chair. He witnessed the rise and fall of the Pelhams, and he lived to see Pitt temporarily supplanted by Lord Bute. He was also directly interested in a movement which has exercised enormous influence on the House of Commons and the management of parties—the rise of the power of the newspaper press.

The Parliament of 1728 returned a large and docile majority for Walpole, and one of the first questions which agitated the minds of its members was the illicit reporting of the debates. A publisher, who had extended and amplified the summaries of speeches given by Boyer[2] since the reign of Queen Anne, was summoned to the Bar and imprisoned; but still the practice grew. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which first appeared in 1731, the reporting of the debates became a prominent

[1] As M.P. for Old Sarum, 1734–35.

[2] In his monthly publication the *Political State of Great Britain.*

feature, as it did in the *London Magazine*, wherein they were compiled by Gordon, the translator of Tacitus. When the next Parliament met the Speaker himself called the attention of the House to the subject, and in so doing allowed it to be seen that he was personally strongly opposed to the proceedings of the House being made public. Few historical writers have taken any notice of this debate.

In the course of an interesting discussion, in which Sir William Wyndham, Pulteney, and Sir Robert Walpole took part, the most sensible view was that taken by the leader of the Opposition. He, Wyndham, contended that the public had a right to know something more of the proceedings of the House than appeared in the votes. But the majority, who seem to have lived in dread of their constituents discovering what passed within the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel, declared that it was a high indignity and a notorious breach of privilege to print the debates at all. The official record of the day's proceedings runs as follows :—

" Thursday, 13 April, 1738.

" *Privilege.* A complaint being made to the House, That the Publishers of several written and printed News Letters and Papers had taken upon them to give accounts therein of the Proceedings of this House; . . .

" Resolved, That it is an high indignity to, and a notorious Breach of the Privilege of this House, for any News Writer, in Letters, or other Papers (as Minutes, or under any other Denomination), or for any Printer or Publisher of any printed News Paper, of any Denomination, to presume to insert in the said Letters or Papers, or to give therein any account of the Debates, or other Proceedings, of this House, or any Committee thereof,

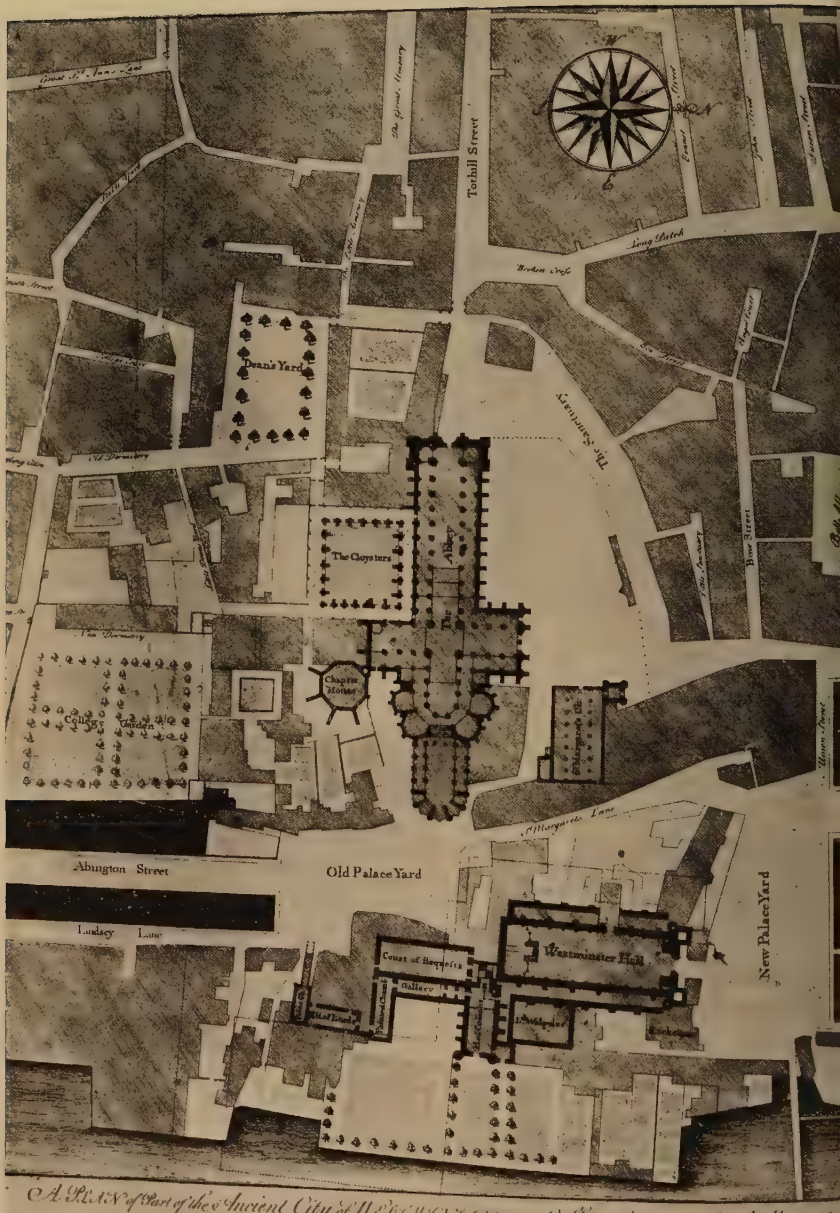
as well during the Recess as the Sitting of Parliament; and that this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders." [1]

The account in Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* of the speeches delivered on this occasion is valuable from its containing an early reference to the custom of the Government and the Opposition sitting on opposite sides of the House. Some doubt has been expressed as to the date at which this practice was first introduced, but it is evident that in 1738 it was well established. Mr. Thomas Winnington, a member who was all in favour of drastic treatment of offending newspapers and magazines, alluded to his being in complete agreement with "the honourable gentleman over the way."

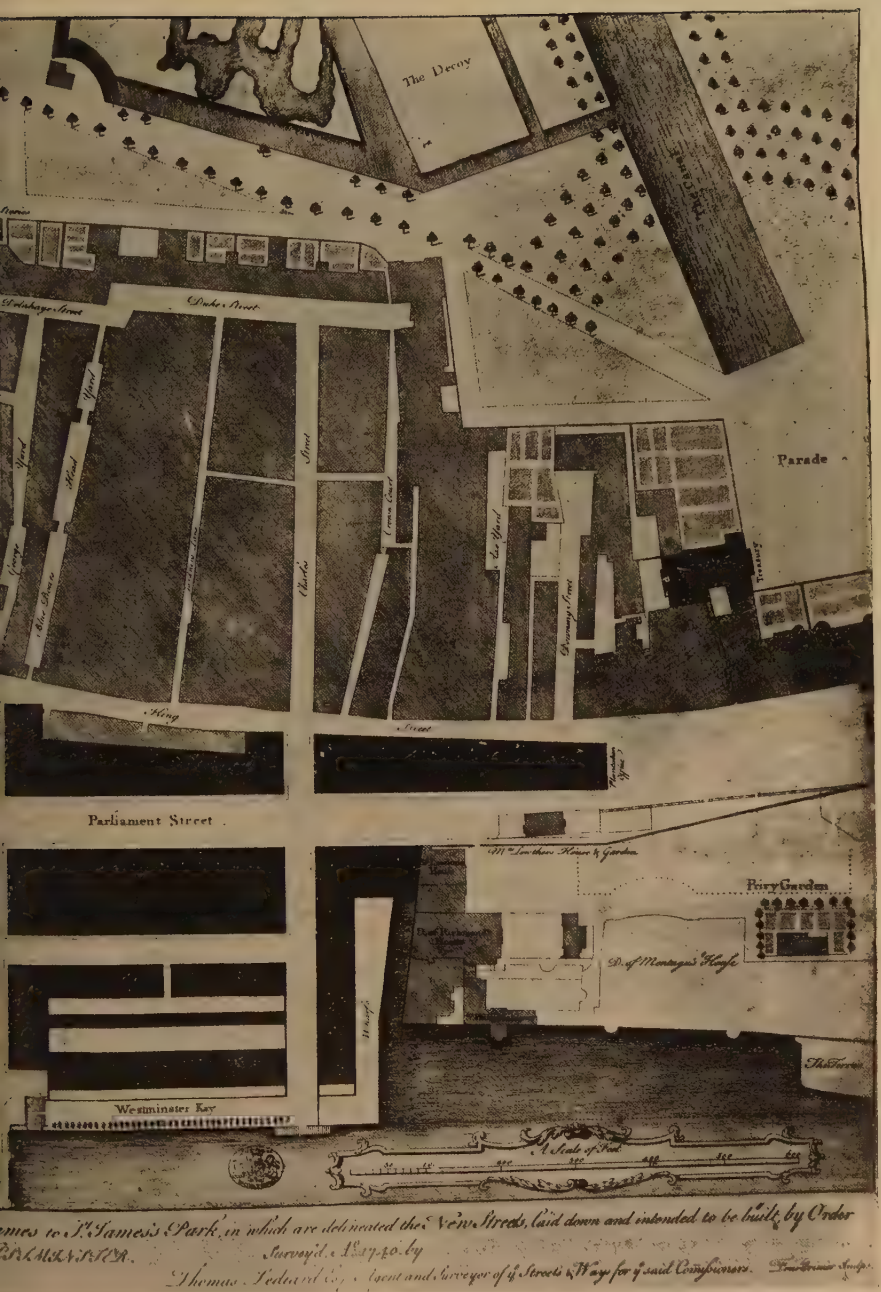
Sir Robert Walpole, in the course of his remarks on the supposed iniquities of the Press, declared that all the debates in which he had taken part which he had had an opportunity of reading in print were so garbled as to convey an entirely contrary meaning to that which he had intended. As to the charge frequently brought against him that he had instigated the publication of newspaper articles, in order to suit the policy of the Government, he only wished to say that, so far as he was able to judge, four pages were written against the Government for every one in its favour.

"No Government, I will venture to say, ever punished so few Libels, and no Government ever had provocation to punish so many. For my own part, I am extremely indifferent what opinion some gentlemen may form of the writers in favour of the Government, but I shall never have the worse opinion of them for that; there is

[1] *Commons Journals*, Vol. XXIII, p. 148.



WESTMINSTER AS SPE
From Ledi



ONSLOW KNEW IT IN 1740
Fourdrinier's Map

nothing more easy than to raise a laugh: it has been the common practice of all minorities, when they were driven out of every other argument."

About this time a systematic attempt was first made to classify the members of both Houses according to their political convictions. Probably owing to an increasing interest on the part of the outside public in Parliamentary proceedings, the *Court Kalendar* for 1732 specified the members who were protesters against the Hessian troops in 1730; and a rival publication, *The Court and City Register*, in its issue for 1742, which was probably printed and circulated immediately after Walpole's defeat, divided the list of Peers into those who voted for and against the Convention; whilst those members of the Commons "who are supposed to be in the country interest at the creation of Robert, Earl of Orford," have their names marked with an asterisk.[1] By passing a drastic Resolution against the printing and publishing of its debates the House was only acting on the principle observed since the time of Elizabeth, when Hooker wrote:—

"Every person of the Parliament ought to keep secret and not to disclose the secrets and things done and spoken in the Parliament House to any manner of person,

[1] These lists, of which those printed before 1740 are now very scarce, were probably first issued soon after the accession of George II. Watson's *Court Kalendar* for 1732, with a full list of both Houses of Parliament and the London addresses of the members, in the author's own collection, is the earliest hitherto met with. The British Museum Library contains the 1733 and many subsequent issues, and a fairly complete series of *The Court and City Register* from 1742 onwards. The better-known *Royal Kalendar* first appeared in 1767, and is still published annually.

unless he be one of the same House, upon pain to be sequestered out of the House, or otherwise punished as by the order of the House shall be appointed."

Notwithstanding the efforts of Sir Symonds D'Ewes and others to spread the light, and the journals kept by private members in the seventeenth century, our knowledge of the actual sayings and doings of Parliament from day to day remained extremely limited until the periodical magazine and the daily newspaper had come to stay. For a century after Speaker Onslow directed attention to the subject the unequal struggle between the Press and the Commons went on. Prosecutions, usually abortive, of offending newspapers and magazines were instituted from time to time, but the publications of Almon, Debrett, and Woodfall attained too much popularity with the outside world to be effectually suppressed. In 1771 the whole question was threshed out in the House, when the Press was so far successful that, from that date forward, the Commons tacitly acquiesced in the claim that the constituencies had a right to be informed of the proceedings of their Parliamentary representatives.

With the growth of the modern newspaper—both the *Morning Post* and *The Times* from their earliest issues have continued to supply a tolerably complete record of the speeches delivered in both Houses—came the shorthand reporters, who, as Speaker Abbot noted in his diary, gained a footing in St. Stephen's as early as 1786. In 1803 they occupied the back bench in the Strangers' Gallery without molestation, though, by one of those curious anomalies which abound in connection with Parliamentary institutions, the Press had still no official

recognition at Westminster. An earlier entry in the same diary shows the scant regard entertained for the newspaper press a century ago. Speaker Onslow could not have been more emphatic in his disapproval of what has been called the fourth estate of the realm :—

" 19 December, 1798. Went to the Cockpit in the evening to hear the King's Speech. Two thirds of the room were filled with strangers and blackguard newswriters."

When, in 1836, the House of Commons began the publication of its own division lists (a reform which had been advocated by Burke in 1770) the battle was virtually won. The earliest instance known to the present writer of the publication of a division list, or something closely resembling one—a minority protest—was when the names of the members who voted against Strafford's attainder in May, 1641, were posted up outside Westminster Hall and headed : " These are the Straffordians, Betrayers of their Country."

The names of the Lords who voted against the occasional Conformity Bill in 1703 were published surreptitiously, as were those who voted for Sacheverell's impeachment in 1710. From that time forth more or less accurate particulars of the more important divisions in both Houses, compiled in the first instance by Abel Boyer, are to be found in the volumes of Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*. It should be mentioned that before the adoption of the present system of taking divisions a trial had been made in 1834 of a very primitive plan by which the names were called out by a

member in the House and another in the lobby outside, and recorded by the Clerks.

After the great fire of 1834 reporters were admitted to the temporary building used by the Commons, and when, in 1852, the representatives of the people took possession of their new chamber in the Palace of Westminster,[1] the Press was at last officially recognised, and the reporters' gallery, as it at present exists, was an acknowledged fact. So voluminous have the *verbatim* reports of speeches become, and so vivid the descriptions of "scenes" in the House within the last few years, that one is sometimes tempted to wish that the penal regulations of the eighteenth century could once more be enforced; for there is some reason to believe that there would be little or no obstruction of business if there were no picturesque reporting of the scenes to which obstruction gives rise. It is only fair to add that *The Times* has been an honourable exception amongst its competitors in the purveying of sensational reports.[2]

During the long years in which Onslow ruled the House many improvements were introduced in the keeping of its official records, all of them tending to regularise and simplify its procedure. The Journals, which had for centuries been kept in a haphazard manner, according to the capacity or incapacity of the Clerk of the House for the time being, assumed a more intelligible shape after 1750, in which year the Clerk of the Journals is first heard of. His office was from the first one of trust

[1] 3 February, 1852, after an experimental sitting in the spring of 1850.

[2] The whole history of Parliamentary reporting has been ably summarised by Mr. Porritt in Chapter XXX of *The Unreformed House of Commons*, 1903, a work of consummate ability and vast research.

and responsibility, and, as the House had no library of its own until early in the nineteenth century, he had the custody of all books and papers relating to the business of the House. He fulfilled, in addition to the compilation of the Journals, which have always been accepted as authoritative evidence in the courts of law, many of the duties which now appertain exclusively to the Librarian. It was owing to Speaker Onslow's exertions that the House, in 1742, first ordered its Journals to be printed.

On the recommendation of a Select Committee, Nicholas Hardinge, then Clerk of the House, entrusted the printing of the Manuscript Journals, from the commencement in 1547, to Samuel Richardson, printer and novelist, then in the first bloom of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded,* in " whose skill and integrity," as the Committee reported, Mr. Hardinge could safely confide. They were printed in Roman letter upon " fine English Demy worth fifteen shillings a ream." By 1825, when another report was made to the House on the same subject, the outlay had reached a grand total of between £160,000 and £170,000.[1]

It is certain that Journal books of an earlier date than 1547 were formerly in existence, as a statute passed in the sixth year of Henry VIII provided that members of Parliament who absented themselves without the licence of the Speaker and of the House, " entered of record in the book of the Clerk of the Parliament appointed for the Commons," should be deprived of their wages. Many instances could be cited of quaint entries made

[1] Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider of printing the Journals of the House. (*Commons Journals;* Vol. XXIV, p. 262.)

by the earlier Clerks of the House in its official Journals, but two must suffice :—

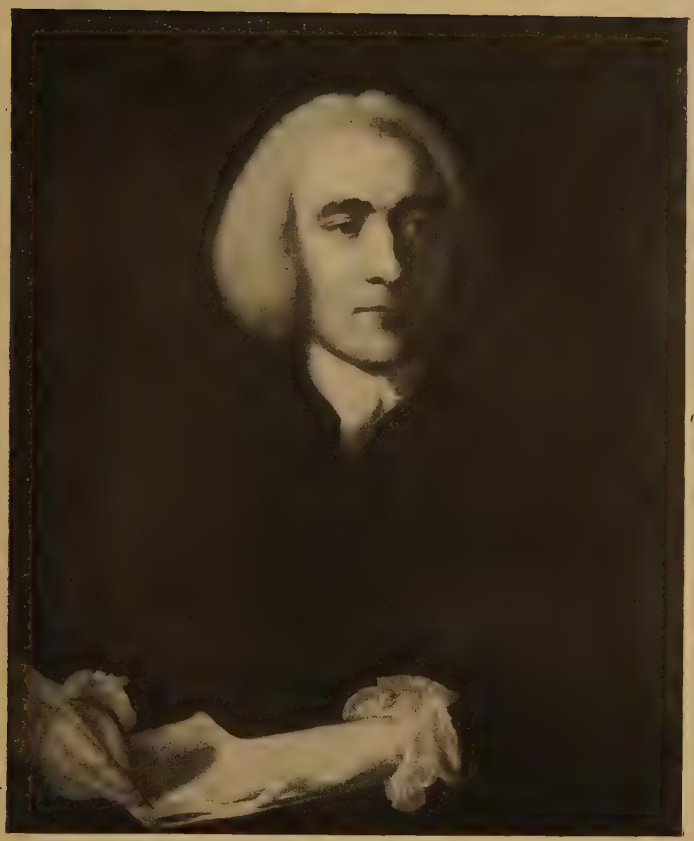
" 31 May, 1604. Prohibitions Bill. During the argument on this Bill a young Jack Daw flew into the House, called *Malum Omen* to the Bill."

" 14 May, 1606. A strange spanyell of mouse colour came into the House." [1]

The earliest issue of the printed *Votes and Proceedings* now in the Journal Office is that of 21 March, 1681 (the Oxford Parliament). But the daily proceedings of the House had certainly been published prior to that date, and the author had in his own possession a single sheet of earlier date in the reign of Charles II. This solitary issue is, unfortunately, no longer in existence, it having been accidentally destroyed by fire some years ago. It was reserved for Sir Thomas Erskine May (Lord Farnborough) to compile a general index to the whole series of Journals from 1547 to the death of Queen Anne, an invaluable work of reference containing many thousands of cross references which, had he never written a line of his better-known *Treatise on the Law and Practice of Parliament*, would entitle him to rank amongst the very highest authorities on this complex subject.

The form in which the Journals, which are elaborated each day from the shorter minutes known as the *Votes and Proceedings* (compiled in the first instance from the Minute Books kept by the Clerks at the table), are now produced and indexed leaves little to be desired. Yet such was the slavish adherence to precedent which formerly characterised the compilation of these

[1] *Commons Journals*, Vol. I, pp. 229, 309.



JEREMIAH DYSON, CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
From a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the possession of Mrs. Myddelton

valuable records that not until November, 1890, were the names of members moving amendments to questions inserted in their pages, although this convenient practice had been followed in the Votes at least as early as 1837, when Mr. Speaker Abercromby was in the Chair. In February, 1866, an alteration was made in the form of the printing of the Votes, whereby the Latin names of the days of the week were replaced by their English equivalents.[1]

In 1750, when the Clerk of the Journals instituted a better method of preserving the official acts of the House, Jeremiah Dyson was Clerk of the House. He purchased the office in 1748, but he was the first to discontinue the objectionable practice of selling the subordinate clerkships to the highest bidder. Dyson left the service of the House to re-enter it as the Tory member for Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, after Onslow's retirement from the Chair. He became a Lord of the Treasury and a Privy Councillor, and, from his acknowledged authority on questions of Parliamentary procedure, he acquired the nickname of " Mungo " Dyson.[2]

Disorderly scenes were comparatively rare in the House of Commons in the middle of the eighteenth century, but in 1751 the authority of the Speaker was defied by a Mr. Alexander Murray, brother to the Lord Elibank of that day, who was summoned to the bar to be reprimanded for riotous behaviour in Covent Garden during a recent Westminster election, and for threatening the high bailiff in the execution of his duty. He is said to

[1] The Lords still adhere to the use of Latin names of week days in their Journals.

[2] The ubiquitous negro slave in Isaac Bickerstaffe's *Padlock*.

have called repeatedly to his followers, "Will nobody kill the dog?" and to have incited them to other acts of violence.

When Murray was brought to the bar he refused to kneel in obedience to the Speaker's order, whereupon the House marked its sense of his contumacy and the enormity of his original offence by committing him to Newgate.

There he caught gaol fever, and, after having declined to avail himself of an offer for his transference to the milder custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, he languished in durance vile until the prorogation brought with it his release. He then made a kind of triumphal progress through the streets of London, escorted to his home by a noisy mob, after which, like many another comet, blazing for a brief hour in the Parliamentary firmament, nothing more was heard of him.

In this same year [1751] Arthur Onslow spoke, of course in Committee, in opposition to the clause in the Regency Bill establishing a Council. Horace Walpole thought his speech "noble and affecting," and it was also warmly praised by Bubb Dodington. The Speaker favoured the House with an historical retrospect of the question from the Regency of the Earl of Pembroke *temp.* Henry III to the Hanoverian era, contending that, though the royal power might with advantage be limited, it could not be divided without grave injury to the State. The Bill, however, received the Royal Assent, at the close of the session, without material alteration.[1]

Onslow was a determined opponent of late sittings

[1] *Commons Journals*, XXVI, p. 32, and Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. XIV, p. 1017.

and late hours of meeting, for which he was inclined to blame the Government of the day.

"This," he wrote, "is shamefully grown of late, even to Two of the Clock. I have done all in my power to prevent it, and it has been one of the griefs and burdens of my life. It has innumerable inconveniences attending it. The Prince of Wales that now is [1] has mentioned it to me several times with concern, and did it again this very day, 7 October, 1759, and it gives me hopes that, as in King William's time, those of his ministers who had the care of the Government business in the House of Commons were dismissed by him to be there by eleven o'clock.

"But it is not the fault of the present King; his hours are early. It is the bad practice of the higher offices, and the members fall into it, as suiting the late hours of pleasure, exercise, or other private avocations.

"The modern practice, too, of long adjournments at Christmas and Easter, and the almost constant adjournment over Saturdays, are a great delay of business and of the sessions.

"This last was begun by Sir Robert Walpole for the sake of his hunting, and was then much complained of, but now everybody is for it." [2]

Onslow was a whole-hearted supporter and fearless advocate of the privileges of the House of Commons whenever it chanced to come into conflict with the Lords. It was, in his opinion, within his province, in presenting Money Bills, to advert not only to measures which had received the Royal Assent or were in readiness

[1] George III.

[2] Speaker Abbot, Lord Colchester, also raised a wail in his diary over the protracted sittings of the House, as is mentioned more particularly hereafter.

to receive it, but also to those which, after having occupied the attention of the Commons, had failed to pass the House of Lords. In the last Parliament of George II, when several Bills had been thrown out by the Peers, he thought it his right and duty to have animadverted upon their failure and their value and importance to the Constitution, and, as appears by a copy of his intended speech endorsed in his own hand, he was only prevented from delivering his opinion at the Bar of the House of Lords by the accident of the King's sudden indisposition, which disabled him from coming in person to prorogue Parliament.[1]

Onslow took leave of the House of Commons, two days before the dissolution, on 18 March, 1761, in the following simple words, spoken straight from his heart :—

" I was never under so great a difficulty in my life to know what to say in this place as I am at present—Indeed it is almost too much for me—I can stand against misfortunes and distresses : I have stood against misfortunes and distresses ; and I may do so again : But I am not able to stand this overflow of good will and honour to me. It overpowers me ; and had I all the strength of language, I could never express the full sentiments of my heart upon this occasion, of thanks and gratitude. If I have been happy enough to perform any services here, that are acceptable to the House, I am sure I now receive the noblest reward for them : the noblest that any man can receive for any merit, far superior, in my estimation, to all the other emoluments of this world. I owe everything to this House. I not only owe to this House that I am in this place, but that I have had their constant support in it ; and to their good

[1] *Vide* Lord Colchester's Diary.

will and assistance, their tenderness and indulgence towards me in my errors, it is, that I have been able to perform my duty here to any degree of approbation: Thanks therefore are not so much due to me for these services, as to the House itself, who made them to be services in me.

"When I began my duty here, I set out with a resolution and promise to the House, to be impartial in everything, and to show respect to everybody. The first I know I have done, it is the only merit I can assume: If I have failed in the other, it was unwillingly, it was inadvertently; and I ask their pardon, most sincerely, to whomsoever it may have happened—I can truly say the giving satisfaction to all has been my constant aim, my study, and my pride.

"And now, sirs, I am to take my last leave of you. It is, I confess, with regret, because the being within these walls has ever been the chief pleasure of my life: But my advanced age and infirmities, and some other reasons, call for retirement and obscurity.

"There I shall spend the remainder of my days; and shall only have power to hope and to pray, and my hopes and prayers, my daily prayer will be, for the continuance of the Constitution in general, and that the freedom, the dignity and authority of this House may be perpetual."[1]

The ex-Speaker died of a gradual decay in Great Russell Street on February 17th, 1768. He had removed there, on quitting the Chair, in order to be near the British Museum, of which he was one of the founders. In his retirement he found his principal solace in his well-stored library, and in the visits of politicians of both parties who desired the benefit of his advice and experience. He was buried first at Thames Ditton, near a former

[1] *Commons Journals*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 1108.

residence of his at Imber Court,[1] but his remains were subsequently removed to Merrow, near Guildford. There are two portraits of him in the Speaker's House, and another at Clandon Park. A likeness of him, as a young man, habited in his Speaker's robes, attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller, is in the National Portrait Gallery. But unless Kneller was a prophet as well as a painter this ascription must be incorrect, for Sir Godfrey died in 1723, and Onslow did not become Speaker until 1727–28. The story, which originated with Lord Colchester, that the chairs in which he and his uncle, Richard Onslow, sat were removed to Clandon is apocryphal, though Speaker Addington, in the next century, claimed the chair as his personal property and took it away with him. The chair occupied by Manners-Sutton at the time of the great Reform Bill, is however preserved at Melbourne.

In Onslow's time a proposal was set on foot to build a new House for the Commons, and plans were even prepared for it and for a new House of Lords by Lord Burlington, in consultation with the Speaker. As early as 1719 the condition of many parts of the old Palace of Westminster was considered to be dangerous, and the Speaker, after consultation by the Office of Works, was requested to report on the repairs which were necessary to make secure the passage leading from St. Stephen's Chapel to the Painted Chamber, the roof and gable end of the Court of Requests, the roof of the Speaker's private chambers and those belonging to the Clerk of the House, Paul Jodrell.[2] The condition of the

[1] Speaker's Lane is still known locally.

[2] *Commons Journals*, Vol. XIX, p. 65.

Cottonian Library was inquired into at the same time, and it was eventually condemned as ruinous. Nothing came of Lord Burlington's scheme of 1733, yet from time to time the demand for an enlarged Chamber is renewed, and even quite recently the congested state of the House on occasions of important divisions has been put forward as an argument in favour of Home Rule for Ireland!

The first Parliament of George III, which met for business on 3 November, 1761, chose as its Speaker Sir John Cust, of Belton, Lincolnshire, the ancestor of the Earls Brownlow, and the Tory member for Grantham. Horace Walpole, who was naturally critical of the successor to the really great man whom Sir Robert had selected to fill the Chair, wrote a few days later :—

"Sir John Cust is Speaker, and baiting his nose, the Chair seems well filled."

He was by no means a success, and he allowed great licence in debate. During the hearing of John Wilkes's case he sat in the Chair for sixteen hours, which was considered a great feat in those days.

"Think of the Speaker, Nay, think of the Clerks taking most correct minutes for sixteen hours and reading them over to every witness; and then let me hear of fatigue! Do you know, not only my Lord Temple—who you may swear never budged as spectator—but old Will Chetwynd, now past eighty, and who had walked to the House, did not stir a single moment out of his place, from three in the afternoon till the division at seven in the morning." [1]

On 17 January, 1770, Cust was taken ill and could not attend the sitting of the House; he resigned on

[1] Horace Walpole to the Earl of Hertford, 15 February, 1764.

22 January, and died five days later from a paralytic seizure at an age when men are still considered young. Educated at Eton, he lived in Argyll Buildings, Great Marlborough Street, in 1761 and 1762, but removed to Downing Street after the latter year. He is buried in St. George's Church, Stamford.[1] Hogarth, who had already painted the interior of the House of Commons with Speaker Onslow in the Chair, introduced Cust's portrait in *The Times*, Plate 2. Drawn in 1762, the plate, for some unexplained reason, was not issued until after the artist's death.

Lord North, in looking for another Speaker, reverted to the practice of appointing an experienced lawyer. His choice fell upon Sir Fletcher Norton, who, after having been leader of the northern circuit, had been Solicitor-General in the Bute Administration, and Attorney-General in that of George Grenville. He was dismissed from the latter post on the formation of the Rockingham Cabinet in July, 1765. He was talked of for the Mastership of the Rolls, but the Lord Chancellor objected to the appointment being made. If it had been, he would have been the last Speaker who ever held that office. At the Bar he earned the reputation of being a bold pleader rather than a learned counsel, and his greed of money gained him the nickname of "Sir Bull Face Double

[1] Of Speakers known to have been educated at Eton, Cust was the first, though in the absence of the earlier school lists it is not possible to say with certainty whether any of his predecessors were trained at Henry's "holy shade." Speakers Grenville, Manners-Sutton, Denison, Brand, Peel, and Lowther were all at Eton, whilst Harley, Hanmer, and Abbot were Westminster boys; and Arthur Onslow, Cornwall, Addington, Mitford, and Shaw-Lefevre received their early education at Winchester. No Harrow man has ever filled the Chair.

SIR JOHN CUST
1761, 1768
From a painting in the Speaker's House

Fee." His demeanour, both in public and private, was overbearing, and his manners coarse; and he showed his contempt for his fellow-members when on one occasion he told the House that in debating a point of law he should value their opinion no more than that of a parcel of drunken porters.

Mrs. Piozzi, in her autobiography, quotes one of the many satirical verses made on this Speaker :—

> "Careless of censure, and no fool to fame,
> Firm in his double post and double fees,
> Sir Fletcher, standing without fear or shame,
> Pockets the cash, and lets them laugh that please."

Junius was even more severe in his strictures. "This," he said, "is the very lawyer described by Ben Jonson," who

> "'Gives forked counsel; takes provoking gold
> On either hand, and puts it up.
> So wise, so grave, of so perplexed a tongue
> And loud, withal, that would not wag, nor scarce lie
> still, without a fee.'"

He fell foul of the elder Pitt in 1766, and accused him, during the debates on the petition of the Stamp Act, of "sounding the trumpet to rebellion," whereon Pitt intimated that he would be ready to fight a duel with him "when his blood was warm." Naturally the Whigs opposed his elevation to the Chair, but Norton was successful by 237 votes to 121 recorded for Mr. Thomas Townshend, who had been put forward, against his will, as a protest against the nominee of the Court. Horace Walpole had a strong aversion to Norton, though he was quick to see that he would rule the House more firmly than Speaker Cust had been able to do:

"Sir Fletcher Norton consented to be Speaker of the House of Commons. Nothing can exceed the badness of his character, even in this bad age; yet I think he can do less hurt in the Speaker's Chair than anywhere else. He has a roughness and insolence, too, which will not suffer the licentious speeches of these last days, and which the poor creature his predecessor did not dare to reprimand." [1]

If ever a Court nursed a viper in its bosom, it was Sir Fletcher Norton. No sooner was he installed in the Chair than he entered into unseemly wrangles with private members, and in a peculiarly offensive article, "The Memoirs of Sir Bull Face Double Fee and Mrs. G—h—m," [2] which appeared in the *Town and Country Magazine* for May, 1770, it was said that he persistently used his position to browbeat the minority. When some disorder arose in debate, he cried, "Pray, gentlemen, be orderly: you are almost as bad as the other House." On 11 February, 1774, he called the attention of the House to a letter written by Horne Tooke in the *Public Advertiser*, reflecting on his conduct in the Chair, but in a truly magnanimous spirit the House vindicated its Speaker and ordered Woodfall, the printer of the letter, to appear at the Bar.

In the next Parliament, despite his unpopularity with the Court, Norton was re-elected to the Chair and without a contest, as his very audacity prevented men from placing themselves in competition with such a notorious bully. In presenting to the Lords the Bill for the better support of the Royal Household on 7 May, 1777, he

[1] Horace Walpole to Mann, 19 January, 1770.
[2] Goreham.

SIR FLETCHER NORTON

1770, 1774

From a painting by Sir Wm. Beechy in the possession of Lord Grantley

made an extraordinary speech, recalling some of the utterances of the mediæval Speakers in drawing attention to the extravagance of the Plantagenet kings. He said that the Commons had granted to His Majesty a very great additional revenue, "great beyond example, great beyond Your Majesty's highest expense." [1] Some contemporary reports gave the last word as "wants" instead of "expense," but the Speaker denied their accuracy.

The Court was, naturally, highly indignant, and Richard Rigby was put up in the House to arraign the conduct of the Speaker, which he did in a speech of great acrimony, declaring that the general sense of the House had been grossly misrepresented by its official spokesman. Thurlow, who was Attorney-General at the time, also contended that the Speaker had given utterance to his own sentiments, and not those of the House at all. But on this occasion Fox came to his rescue, and, by a skilful piece of special pleading, induced the House to assent to a motion exonerating the Speaker whilst stultifying its previous action.

During the debate on Burke's Establishment Bill[2] the Speaker made a violent attack on Lord North: "There was a strange scene of Billingsgate between the Speaker and the Minister; the former stooping to turn informer, and accusing the latter of breach of promise on a lucrative job, in which Sir Fletcher was to have been advantaged." [3] As the Speaker continued to act in hostility to the Court, George III was determined that, if he could

[1] Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. XIX, p. 213.
[2] 13 March, 1780.
[3] Horace Walpole to Mann, 14 March, 1780.

prevent it, he should not be voted to the Chair a third time. It was during Norton's tenure of office that women were excluded from the gallery of the House in consequence of a disturbance which took place in the year 1778. After that date they were only permitted to view the proceedings from a ventilator in the roof of St. Stephen's Chapel. Twenty-five tickets for this apartment were issued every night by the Serjeant-at-Arms. Wraxall relates that he had seen the Duchess of Gordon habited as a man sitting in the Strangers' Gallery, and the beautiful Mrs. Sheridan is said to have adopted the same disguise in order to listen to her husband's oratory.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the House of Commons presented a much more picturesque appearance than it does at the present day. Members wore their orders, stars glittered on the front benches, and after the revival of the Order of the Bath red ribands were contrasted with blue. Lord North was always spoken of as "the noble lord in the blue ribbon." It was the etiquette of Parliament to wear orders, as at Court, and the lace cravat and ruffle, the powdered hair worn in a *queue*, were all but universal.

The members for the City of London were the last to preserve a trace of the former splendour of vestment when on the first day of a new session they took their seats on the Treasury Bench in all the gorgeousness of mazarine robes and gold chains. The last Speaker of the unreformed House, Manners-Sutton, with the red riband of the Bath thrown across his manly figure, looked the impersonation of grandeur in apparel. Even Fox, before he adopted the blue frock-coat and buff waistcoat, was seen in the House by the all-observant Wraxall in a hat and feather.

SIR FLETCHER NORTON
A caricature by Ingleby lent by Lord Grantley

The American Revolution swept away Court suits, swords, and bag wigs; and Pitt dealt a mortal blow at the wearing of hair powder. With the French Revolution came a more sombre taste in dress, levelling all distinctions; and with an occasional eccentricity of attire, adopted, as a rule, for the sake of acquiring notoriety, the House presents at the present time a depressing uniformity of sartorial art, relieved only by the uniforms of the Mover and Seconder of the Address in answer to the gracious Speech from the Throne, and the periodical appearances of an officer of the Household when bearing a message from the Crown.

Sir Fletcher Norton lived in Lincoln's Inn Fields till his death on 1 January, 1789. He bought his house there, No. 63, in 1758 for £1721, and when sold in 1884 it realized £13,000. Its windows were broken by a mob on 8 May, 1771, when the town went mad because the House had committed Brass Crosby and Richard Oliver to the Tower in connection with Wilkes's agitation for the liberty of the Press. An even greater crowd attacked Lord North's house in the Cockpit at Whitehall and threatened to pull it down.

After Speaker Norton's transference to the House of Lords, as Baron Grantley of Markenfield,[1] he exhibited the same instability of political principle which had marked his earlier career; but he ultimately returned to the Tory fold when his capacity for inflicting serious harm on his party had vanished. On the meeting of George III's fourth Parliament he had persuaded himself

[1] John Wilkes said, when he heard of the title which Norton had selected, that it was most appropriate since it was composed of his two favourite objects—a grant and a lie.

into believing that he would again be nominated for the Chair, and he professed to be highly indignant when the House chose Mr. Charles Wolfran Cornwall, member of a respectable Herefordshire family and a Gray's Inn lawyer without much practice at the Bar, in his place. "Sir Fletcher Norton, who never haggles with shame, published his own disgrace, and declared that he had been laid aside without notice. Courts do not always punish their own profligates so justly," were the scathing words in which Horace Walpole pronounced his presidential epitaph.

Mr. Cornwall's political complexion was supposed to have been determined when he married, in 1764, Lord Liverpool's sister. But for a time he attached himself to Lord Shelburne and acted with the Whigs. Later on he found political salvation under Lord North, from whom he accepted the post of a Lord of the Treasury. The new Speaker possessed a sonorous voice and an imposing presence, two extremely valuable Parliamentary assets, but he was by nature of a shy and retiring disposition, and was described by Walpole—a not altogether unprejudiced critic—as "blushing up to the eyes from a crimson conscience."

One of the minor economies in Burke's Bill for the reduction of the Civil List produced a curious situation at the close of the session of 1782. The Jewel Office had recently been abolished in the general process of retrenchment, and when the King signified his intention of proroguing Parliament in person the officials hitherto responsible for the conveyance of the Regalia from the Tower were found to be non-existent. No one seemed to know exactly whose business it was to issue the order

CHARLES WOLFRAN CORNWALL.
1780, 1784
From a painting by Gainsborough in the Speaker's House

for the production of the crown and sceptre, or how they were to be transported to Westminster. Neither the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker could solve the riddle; but the Home Secretary[1] rose to the occasion at the last moment, and, dispensing with a military escort, empowered the Bow Street magistrates to convey the Regalia of England in two hackney coaches with blinds closely drawn, and guarded only by a handful of police officers. They took a circuitous and unfrequented route by the New Road down Great Portland Street and thence to Westminster, returning the same way in the afternoon without attracting the slightest public attention. Had the secret of these unpretentious vehicles been revealed a dozen armed desperadoes could easily have overpowered the police and emulated the far more hazardous exploit of Colonel Blood in the reign of Charles II. And had any mishap occurred to the Crown jewels the severest censure would justly have been cast upon a system of economy fraught with such disastrous consequences at the outset.

On 27 February, 1786, Cornwall gave a casting vote against the Government on the question of the proposed fortification of Portsmouth and Plymouth at what was then considered the huge cost of a million of money. The plan was condemned in the House by General Burgoyne, Sheridan, and Fox, and the dawn had begun to stream in through the windows of St. Stephen's Chapel when the division was called. The members were found to be 169 on each side, and an uproar arose unparalleled since the defeat of Lord North in 1782. Silence having

[1] The Rt. Hon. Thomas Townshend. Previously to 1782 he was officially styled Secretary of State for the Northern Department.

been restored Cornwall stood up, and, after declaring the numbers, added that at so late an hour he was too exhausted to enter into the merits of a subject already fully discussed. "I shall therefore content myself with voting against the original motion, and declaring that the Noes have carried the question." Caricatures were issued representing the Duke of Richmond, the Master of the Ordnance and the real author of the scheme, attempting to apply a match to a battery of artillery, while the Speaker, in his robes, extinguished the fire by the same means which Gulliver adopted when he succeeded in quenching the flames which broke out in the royal apartments of Lilliput.

In the Coalition Ministry, headed by the Duke of Portland in 1783, Cornwall was unanimously re-elected, and he remained in the Chair till his death, which, by a singular coincidence, occurred within twenty-four hours of his old opponent, Sir Fletcher Norton.[1]

History has recorded the name of one, at least, of those who have attained the great position of the Chair whom the House was constrained to expel on the ground of corruption proved up to the hilt; of others, like Dudley, Empson, and Rich, who deserve the contempt of posterity in an even higher degree. A Speaker has been known to burst into tears in the Chair; but, up till such a comparatively recent period as 1780, no case had occurred in which a Speaker has been chiefly remembered for his having been addicted to drink.

A new precedent was set in an easy-going age, when Mr. Speaker Cornwall relieved the tedium of long debates

[1] Lord Grantley died on 1 January, and Mr. Cornwall on 2 January, 1789.

by copious draughts of porter, a flagon of which was placed conveniently at his elbow.

> "Like sad Prometheus fastened to the rock,
> In vain he looks for pity to the clock,
> In vain th' effects of strengthening porter tries,
> And nods to Bellamy's for fresh supplies." [1]

Cornwall had the advantage of hearing the greatest oratorical triumphs of Pitt and Fox, the thunders of Burke, and the lightning-like flashes of Sheridan's wit. Was it Sheridan, or Lord Hervey, who said of a fellow-member of Parliament that he was evidently bent upon doing his party all the harm he could, since he spoke *for* them and voted *against* them? Yet not one of these giants of debate could keep the Speaker from falling asleep in his Chair.

Once when David Hartley, the worthy member for Hull, but a portentously dull speaker, whose rising was usually the signal for a general exodus, asked the Speaker's permission to read a clause in the Riot Act, Burke exclaimed, before the Speaker could intervene, "You have read it already; the mob is dispersed." Another story of the same unconscionable talker against time is that Mr. Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Liverpool, leaving the house as Hartley rose to speak, once rode down to Wimbledon, dined there, rode back, and found him still on his legs prosing to a select and patient few.

On his first entry into Parliament Cornwall lived in Golden Square, then a fashionable quarter of the town, but on being called to the Chair he removed to the Privy Garden, Whitehall. His portrait, by Gainsborough, at

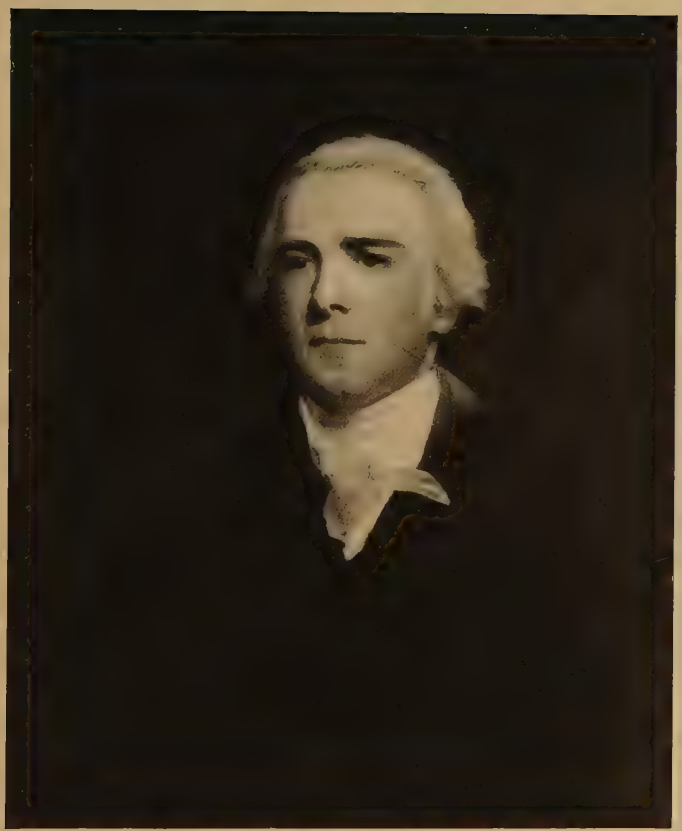
[1] *The Rolliad.*

the Speaker's House is one of the best in the whole collection. Wraxall, whose memoirs of contemporary notabilities are especially valuable at this period, snappishly said of him: "Never was any man in a public situation less regretted or sooner forgotten."

When the necessity arose for appointing a successor to Cornwall, and the younger Pitt looked round the ministerial benches, he bethought himself of his cousin, William Wyndham Grenville, who was exactly of his own age. When only twenty-two he had been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, his brother, Earl Temple, being the Lord-Lieutenant, for it was an axiom in the Pitt family that the Grenvilles must be taken care of. It was an age of young men, and even whilst he was at Eton Grenville had attracted the attention of the outside world. There was a rebellion in the school, and two hundred boys left Eton for an inn at Maidenhead. They observed great order and method in their proceedings, choosing officers and keeping accounts of their expenditure. Young Grenville was asked whether he would be treasurer or captain. Without hesitation he said he would rather be treasurer. Whilst the young rebels were awaiting events Grenville received a letter from his father[1] ordering him to return to Eton immediately on pain of never seeing his face again. Much perplexed at the receipt of the letter, for before it reached him the boys had taken an oath to stand by one another, he determined to obey his father and quit the confederacy.

Showing his companions his accounts, he asked that they might be examined to see if they were correct. Whereupon young Montagu, a son of Lord Sandwich,

[1] George Grenville, First Lord of the Treasury 1763–65.



WILLIAM WYNDHAM GRENVILLE
1789
From a painting in the National Portrait Gallery

who was captain, told him that he had made a good treasurer, but a miserable leader of a party, and that he did not doubt that they would meet again in some other place, where Grenville might depend upon his being reproached for the desertion of his friends. Young Grenville was sent back to Eton by his father for a few hours (probably in order to be flogged), and was then taken away from the school. Lord Granby, who had two sons in the rebellion, sent them to the play, saying: "You shall go there to-night for your pleasure, and to-morrow you shall return to Dr. Foster and be flogged for mine!" Lord Sandwich's son was a good prophet, for a cold and unsympathetic manner prevented Grenville in after life from kindling the enthusiasm so necessary to successful leadership, be his industry and integrity what it may. That he was quite conscious of this defect is apparent from a letter he wrote to his brother years later: "I am not competent to the management of men. I never was so naturally, and toil and anxiety more and more unfit me for it."

Few men have reached the Speaker's Chair at such an early age, at any rate since the Middle Ages, as Grenville. He was not thirty at the time of his election by 215 votes to 144 recorded for Sir Gilbert Elliot. On this occasion, as the King was ill, the new Speaker did not go up to the House of Peers for the royal approbation. Had the King's illness continued, and the Regency Bill passed in 1788, the Whigs, on entering office, would have dissolved Parliament, and it was generally understood that Michael Angelo Taylor would have been appointed Speaker. But the recovery of the King extinguished Taylor's brilliant prospects.

One of Gillray's clever caricatures satirises his disappointment: "The New Speaker between the Hawks and the Buzzards" depicts the opposing parties uniting in preventing Taylor from ascending the Chair. Michael Angelo Taylor, if remembered at all at the present day, is rescued from Parliamentary oblivion by an Act which he was instrumental in passing for the improvement of the London streets, and which is always called by his name.

Grenville only held office for five months, as he became Home Secretary in the summer of 1789. The next year he was made a peer, and when, on the death of Pitt, the Tory party was rent into a multitude of fortuitous atoms, he became Prime Minister of "all the Talents," the ministry which did indeed abolish the slave trade, but failed in nearly everything else which it attempted. The rewards which were showered on the Grenville family during a long series of years, and especially under Lord Liverpool, were so considerable as to give rise to Lord Holland's witty saying: "All articles are now to be had at low prices, except Grenvilles." William Wyndham Grenville, it must be admitted, was as great an offender in this respect as any member of his family, for he held the post of Auditor of the Exchequer, a sinecure worth £4000 a year, for forty years, though much blamed for retaining it after he became Prime Minister.

For calling the Grenvilles "a family of cormorants" the Duke of Buckingham challenged the Duke of Bedford of that day to a duel in Kensington Gardens. His Grace of Stowe, who was of enormous bulk, should have presented an excellent target to his adversary, but

though shots were exchanged on both sides, honour professed itself satisfied without the shedding of a drop of blood. The seconds were Lord Lynedoch and Sir Watkin Wynn, and a caricature of the scene was published, entitled "The Bloodless Rencontre," 1822.[1]

Speaker Grenville's knowledge of the procedure of the House of Commons cannot have been extensive, and he was probably content to rely upon the advice of Hatsell, an acknowledged authority on the subject, and Clerk of the House from 1768 to 1797. His clerk assistant, John Ley, one of an old Devonshire family which has served the House of Commons in an official capacity for 150 years, became Clerk in 1797 (at first as deputy to Hatsell), and retained the post until his death in 1814. To him succeeded Jeremiah Dyson, 1814–20; John Henry Ley, 1820–50; Sir Denis Le Marchant, 1850–71; Sir Thomas Erskine May (Lord Farnborough), 1871–86; Sir Reginald Palgrave, 1886–1900; Sir Archibald Milman, 1900–02, who was succeeded in the latter year by Sir Courtenay Ilbert, transferred to Westminster from the Treasury. Before becoming Speaker Grenville lived at the Pay Office in Whitehall, and on resigning the Chair he removed to 20, St. James's Square (Sir Watkin Wynn's beautiful Adam house), where he lived with his widowed sister. His widow, Lord Camelford's daughter, survived him until 1864, a remarkable link with the past.

Pitt's next choice for the Chair was Henry Addington, the son of his father's regular medical attendant, and,

[1] This anecdote was told to the author by the Rt. Hon. G. W. E. Russell, grandson of the sixth Duke of Bedford, who had heard it from his father, Lord Charles Russell, Serjeant-at-Arms to the House of Commons from 1848 to 1875.

like the previous Speaker, still in the prime of youth. Sir Gilbert Elliot was again put forward by the Opposition, and though by a strange coincidence exactly the same number of votes were recorded for Addington as there had been for Grenville, Elliot's supporters fell off by two. When old Addington heard of his son's success he is said to have remarked: "Depend upon it this is but the beginning of that boy's career." On three subsequent occasions he was re-elected unanimously. "The doctor," as he was facetiously called, had not sat long in the House, and his voice was almost unknown in it, but he had applied himself diligently to the study of the procedure and practice of Parliament. A new departure was made in 1790, when he was voted a fixed salary of £6000 a year, in place of the old system of remuneration by fees and sinecure offices.

A genial mediocrity, he was very popular with the country party, and Pitt had a high opinion of him, which posterity has not altogether shared. On the other hand spiteful Whigs, like Creevey, always spoke of him as "the cursed apothecary." In the celebrated altercation which took place between Pitt and Tierney in May, 1798, his personal predilection for the former overbore his impartiality. When he learnt that a duel was to take place, not only did he make no attempt to put a stop to it, but he went to Wimbledon Common to be an eye-witness of the encounter. On the following Sunday[1] two shots were exchanged on either side without a hit, when the seconds pronounced that honour was satisfied. Pitt's opponents declared that he had indulged not wisely but too well in

[1] 27 May, 1798.

G. Richmond, pinxt. *E. Scriven sculpt.*

HENRY ADDINGTON
1789, 1790, 1796, 1801
From a print

the convivialities of the dinner table on the afternoon of the debate, which gave rise to the duel. However this may be, such symposia were not uncommon at the close of the eighteenth century, and *The Rolliad* contains a pointed allusion to a scene of this description in an epigram on Pitt and Dundas :—

> "I can't see the Speaker, Hal; can you?"
> "Not see the Speaker, Will! I see two."

Old John Ley, the Clerk of the House in succession to Hatsell, was so disturbed at Pitt's condition on one occasion that he declared he had not been able to sleep all night for thinking of it.

But when the Prime Minister was told of this, he laughed it off by saying :

"Could there possibly have been a fairer division? I had the wine, and the Clerk, poor man, had the headache!"

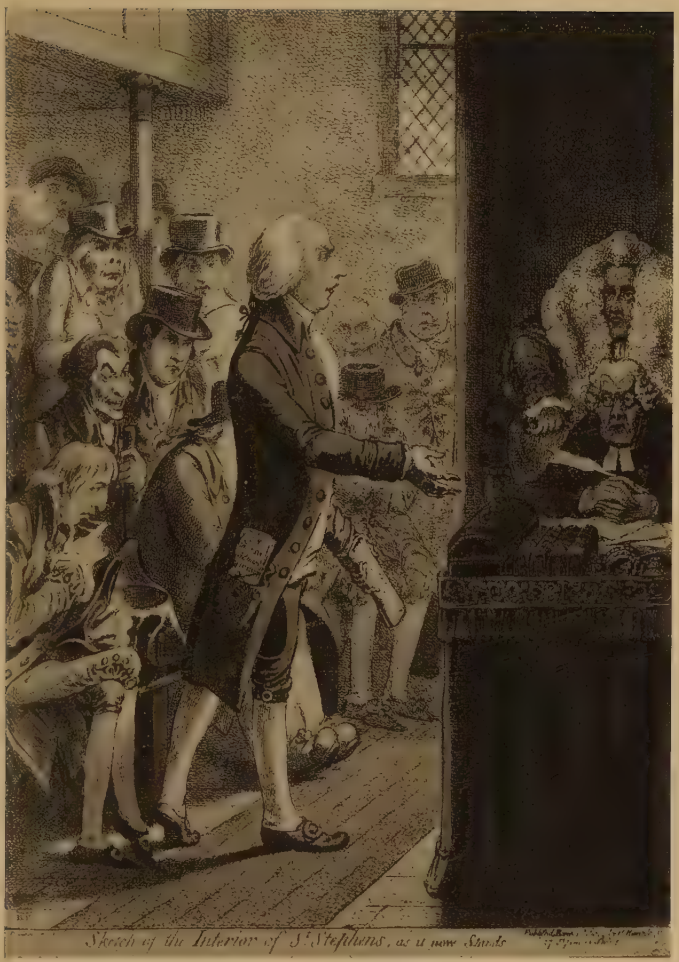
In February, 1801, Addington resigned the Speakership, and in March he became First Lord of the Treasury in an administration which was only noteworthy for the Peace of Amiens. The periodical recurrence of mediocrity in high places, counterbalancing and correcting the achievements of genius, is a curious and persistent feature of English political life. Not easy to account for but patent to all, it is probably not without advantage to a community temporarily satiated with the heroic element in public affairs, and, when an Addington succeeds a Pitt, or a Wilmington replaces a Walpole as leading minister of the Crown, it is often found that the Parliamentary machine runs all the smoother from not being driven at full speed. Almost wholly uninformed upon foreign affairs, for

he had never visited the Continent or studied diplomatic interests, Addington's mind was not attuned to the ready comprehension of international politics. "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits," and, whilst he had a fair knowledge of finance and a conciliatory Parliamentary manner, he was conspicuously lacking in that elevation of mind and loftiness of character which so distinguished the younger Pitt.

"As London is to Paddington
So is Pitt to Addington,"

ran a couplet which was composed at the time of his being called to the head of the Administration.

When the war with France broke out again in 1803 the Prime Minister's opponents said that his gaze was directed exclusively to the Channel and to that, to him, unknown French coast, in abject terror at the thought of the threatened invasion of England's shores by Napoleon. No sooner did Pitt weary of the seclusion of Walmer Castle and evince a desire to resume his former position than Addington's power dissolved into thin air. He subsided for a time into private life, soon, however, to reappear in a subordinate position. It was then that his great opponent Canning said of him: "Addington is like the chicken-pox or the measles. Ministers are bound to have him at least once in their lives." During his tenure of the Chair the House voted the buildings formerly occupied by the Auditor of the Exchequer as an official residence for the Speaker. Addington seems to have taken up his abode in the Palace in 1795. The crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel, which had been used in the time of Lord Halifax as a coal-



SKETCH OF THE INTERIOR OF ST. STEPHEN'S WITH PORTRAITS OF ADDINGTON, SPEAKER ABBOT, AND JOHN LEY (CLERK OF THE HOUSE)
From a print by Js. Gillray

cellar, was converted into a state dining-room, and, as "the doctor" was of a convivial nature, and wont to describe himself as the "last survivor of the port-wine faction," he entertained there frequently. An account of one of these banquets will be found at a later page.[1]

His daughter-in-law, the second Lady Sidmouth, who only died in 1894 at the great age of ninety-nine, lived much in her youth with her father-in-law, and with Mr. Hatsell, the Clerk of the House. She retained in her old age a vivid recollection of Pitt and Fox, and well remembered hearing Wilberforce speak on the abolition of the Slave Trade. But probably her most interesting reminiscence was in connection with Nelson: she distinctly recollected his coming to dine at the White Lodge in Richmond Park[2] in 1805, and explaining the plan of his operations which ended with the glorious victory of Trafalgar. The Admiral traced the probable course of his fleet on the dinner table, dipping his finger in a glass of wine to illustrate his meaning. This table is still preserved as an heirloom at Up Ottery Manor, the family place, in Devonshire.

It has been well said that genius has no ancestry. Yet mediocrity can often successfully lay claim to a long pedigree. Old Dr. Addington, prior to his retirement to Reading, had practised the healing art first in Bedford Row, in which unfashionable street the future Speaker and Prime Minister was born in 1757, and afterwards in

[1] In 1798 the House voted £2542 10s. 6d. for the expense of fitting up the houses occupied by the Speaker and the Serjeant-at-Arms. (*Commons Journals*, 24 April, 1798.)

[2] Of which her father-in-law, the ex-Speaker, was Deputy Ranger.

Clifford Street, Burlington Gardens. On his son's being raised to the Peerage he astonished his friends by proving his descent from a Devonshire family seated at Up Ottery since the seventeenth century. The new peer adopted as his motto the words "Libertas sub rege pio," which "Bobus" Smith impudently translated into "Our pious king has got liberty under."

Of Speaker Addington there is a likeness by Phillips in the official residence at Westminster. The formation of the collection there was due to his initiative; it fortunately escaped destruction in the great fire of 1834, and since his time it has been considerably augmented both by purchase and by the munificence of private donors. The portrait of the next Speaker, Sir John Mitford, afterwards Lord Redesdale, was thrown out of the window in the hurry and confusion of the fire, but not till it had been charred and singed by the flames, and it bears the marks of this rough usage to the present day.

On the death of Lord Clare, Mitford was made Lord Chancellor of Ireland, with a salary of £10,000 and a retiring pension of £4000, and a peer of the United Kingdom. He was the last Speaker to be transferred to the Judicial Bench on vacating the Chair. According to Sir Egerton Brydges, he was "a sallow man, with a round face and blunt features, of a middle height, thickly and heavily built, and had a heavy, drawling, tedious manner of speech." His election to the Chair was opposed by Sheridan, though he did not press his objection to a division. Mitford's attention had been directed to the office of Speaker by Hatsell at the time of Addington's election, but, as he naively told his successor, what he really had

SIR JOHN MITFORD
1801
From a painting in the Speaker's House

in view was the more lucrative Mastership of the Rolls. When Mitford was chosen he conferred with Abbot, telling him that he did not think the position was so arduous as some chose to represent it, and that he was of opinion that it only required diligence, civility, and firmness. Abbot was also informed by Addington that though Mitford had accepted the chair, it might not be for long, and that he wished him to qualify himself as far as possible to succeed him on the next vacancy.[1]

With the appreciative eye of a new member Abbot recorded in his diary his impressions of a state dinner given by his friend "the doctor" in February, 1796. Nothing seems to have escaped his attention with the exception of the hour at which the banquet began.

"Dined at the Speaker's. We were twenty in number, Lord Bridport, Sir George Beaumont, Sir A. Edmonstone, Sir W. Scott Lascelles, Colonel Beaumont, Mr. Adams, Sir H. G. Calthorpe, Bankes, Burton, Wilberforce, Powys, Parker, Coke, Metcalfe, E. Bouverie, Bramston, and Mr. Gipps and the chaplain.

"We dined in a vaulted room under the House of Commons, looking towards the river,—an ancient crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel.

"We were served on plate bearing the King's arms. Three gentlemen out of livery and four men in full liveries and bags. The whole party full-dressed, and the Speaker himself so, except that he wore no sword.

"The style of the dinner was soups at top and bottom,

[1] Lord Colchester's diary alludes to his meeting Mitford to discuss the Speakership at "the Coffee House." This must have been Howard's Coffee House which immediately adjoined the upper end of Westminster Hall. It was not burnt in the fire, but removed on the erection of the new Houses of Parliament.

changed for fish, and afterwards changed for roast saddle of mutton and roast loin of veal.

"The middle of the table was filled with a painted plateau ornamented with French white figures and vases of flowers. Along each side were five dishes, the middle centres being a ham and boiled chicken.

"The second course had a pig at top, a capon at bottom, and the two centre middles were turkey and a larded guinea-fowl. The other dishes, puddings, pies, puffs, blancmanges, etc. The wine at the corners in ice pails during the dinner. Burgundy, champagne,[1] hock, and hermitage. The dessert was served by drawing the napkins and leaving the cloth on. Ices at top and bottom; the rest of the dessert oranges, apples, ginger wafers, etc. Sweet wine was served with it.

"After the cloth was drawn a plate of thin biscuits was placed at each end of the table and the wine sent round, viz. claret, port, Madeira, and sherry. Only one toast given—'The King.'[2]

"The room was lighted by patent lamps on the chimney and upon the side tables. The dinner-table had a double branch at top and at bottom, and on each side of the middle of the table. Coffee and tea were served on waiters at eight o'clock. The company gradually went out of the room, and the whole broke up at nine."

On 11 November, 1800, in consequence of some repairs which were in progress in St. Stephen's Chapel, the Commons, after the lapse of centuries, met once more in the Painted Chamber.[3] The Speaker acquainted the House on the opening day of the session that he had received a letter from the Lord Steward, in which he was

[1] An early notice of its use in England.
[2] A custom still observed on these occasions.
[3] Sometimes called St. Edward's Chamber.

commanded to inform the House that, as the chamber in which they usually assembled was not in a fit state to receive them, His Majesty had given orders that the Painted Chamber should be fitted up for their accommodation during the ensuing session.

In adapting this venerable apartment—for it was probably of even earlier date than the Great Hall—to its temporary purpose the interesting discovery was made that its walls, like those of the neighbouring Chapel, were entirely covered under the tapestry hangings with historical paintings of considerable artistic merit. The subjects represented were the Wars of the Maccabees and scenes from the life of Edward the Confessor, with explanatory inscriptions in Norman-French. These paintings were probably executed to the order of Henry III, and, though careful drawings were made of them at the time of their discovery, the authorities who should have taken steps to preserve them promptly covered them with a coat of whitewash! The very existence of these mural decorations had been forgotten, and they would probably have escaped notice, until their final destruction by fire in 1834, had it not been for the accidental use, for the last time in its long history, by the Commons of the room in which, by tradition, the Confessor is said to have breathed his last. Once more its doors were flung open to receive the body of the younger Pitt, who lay in state there before his interment in the Abbey.[1]

[1] Lord Colchester notes the meeting of the House in the Painted Chamber in his diary for 1800, and *The Times*, in its Parliamentary report, 12 November, 1800, also alludes to the unwonted place of assembly.

The procession of Tory Speakers was continued by Charles Abbot, who was created Lord Colchester on his retirement, with a pension of £4000 a year and £3000 to his successor in the title. From his earliest entry into Parliament in 1795 he enjoyed the confidence of Addington, who told him to make the Chair the goal of his ambition. Gillray is responsible for a "Sketch of the Interior of St. Stephen's as it now stands," with portraits of Addington, Abbot, and John Ley in the clerk's seat. It was Speaker Abbot who gave his casting vote against Pitt[1] when Whitbread brought forward a motion for the impeachment of Lord Melville on account of peculation in the administration of the Navy. Ministers made no attempt to screen Lord Melville, if he were guilty, from public censure; but they contended that, upon a subject of such magnitude, affecting as it did, not only the character of Parliament, but of every individual member of the House, the fullest investigation should precede a final decision.

Pitt proposed the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the charges brought with irresistible force against Lord Melville, but on the numbers being found to be equal, 216 to 216, the Speaker, pale with emotion and after ten minutes of terrible suspense, during which the dropping of a pin might have been heard in the crowded House, gave his vote against the Government. When the decision of the Chair was made known Pitt burst into tears, and at past five in the morning hurried from the House. The next day Lord Melville resigned.

Speaker Abbot was the inventor of the Census; he introduced many improvements in the form and printing

[1] 8 April, 1805.

THE RIGHT HON: CHARLES ABBOT, D.C.L. & F.R.S

CHARLES ABBOT
1802-2, 1806, 1807, 1812
From a print

of the official records, and he left an interesting Parliamentary diary. In it is a valuable note on the hours of meeting of the House, which had steadily been growing later, in unison with the dinner-hour of London society.

"Mr. Pitt asked me at parting what would be the proper time for beginning public business every day. I said I thought half-past four, if he could come. He said by all means, it was just as easy for him to come at that hour as at any other. He actually came at five." [1]

Some mention has already been made of the early hour at which the House was accustomed to meet in Elizabethan times. During the Commonwealth and in the reign of Charles II it was usual for the House to stand adjourned at its rising until the following morning at 9 a.m. This continued to be the practice until 1770, when the nominal hour of meeting was altered to 10 a.m. This, with an occasional variation to 11 a.m., continued till the year 1810; but it will be seen that there was a considerable difference between the nominal and the actual time for commencing public business.

From 1811 to 1835 no hour is mentioned in the Votes for resumption on the following day, but from the latter year the time at which the Speaker would take the Chair is usually notified as three or half-past. On 18 July, 1835, it was appointed to meet at a quarter to four, at which hour it remained until 1888, when three o'clock was reverted to. The present time of meeting is a quarter of an hour earlier. At the close of the session of 1808 Lord Colchester wrote:—

"The most laborious session for hours of sitting ever

[1] *Diary of Lord Colchester*, Vol. I, p. 543.

known within living memory of the oldest members or officers of the House. There were 111 sitting days, amounting to 829 hours, averaging 7½ hours a day. Since Easter to the close of the session rarely less than 10 or 11 hours every day."

What would he have thought of 1887, when the House sat on 160 days, and for 277 hours after midnight!

On 24 May, 1803, the Speaker wrote in his diary :—

"Settled with the Serjeant-at-Arms and Mr. Ley that the gallery door should be opened, every day if required, at twelve; and the Serjeant would let the House Keeper understand that the 'news writers' might be let in their usual places (the back row of the gallery), as being understood to have the order of particular members like any other strangers."

This Speaker persuaded the Government to spend £70,000 in improving his official residence between 1802 and 1808, and the alterations and additions were carried out by Wyatt, the fashionable architect of the day, but one of the greatest Vandals his profession has ever known when engaged on the restoration of ancient buildings. Worse than "Blue Dick," who "rattled down proud Becket's glassy bones" at Canterbury from mistaken religious conviction, Wyatt, at Salisbury, in addition to other enormities, carted into the town ditch the mediæval glass which had escaped the Reformation and the Commonwealth.

"The King talked to me at length about the forms of the House of Commons, and the conversion of the Speaker's house in Palace Yard. He looked remarkably well; rather grown larger within the last twelvemonth, and very cheerful. The King having asked me very

particularly about the Speaker's house, and its' being finished, I wrote to the Duke of Portland to desire he would ask the King for his portrait, to be placed as the only picture in the principal of those apartments which the members of the House of Commons are accustomed to visit in the course of the session." [1]

The picture was given, and it was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence, but it is nowhere to be found at Westminster now. The large expenditure on the official residence was much commented upon at the time, and Tierney, who voiced the opinion of the economists, threatened to bring the matter before the House; but the Speaker referred him to the architect, and the storm blew over. Wyatt probably destroyed far more than he preserved, as is painfully evident from the additional plates in Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*, in which Plates 24 and 26, 27 and 28, show extensive demolitions in progress on the east side of the old House of Lords and the vicinity of the Princes' Chamber; but a curious oak door, painted and gilt with arabesque ornaments, which was found plastered up in the crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel, escaped wanton destruction, only to perish in the fire of 1834.[2]

On the debate on the Address, at the opening of the session of 1810, the Speaker showed that he was no respecter of persons in his official capacity. "We had a grand fuss in telling the House. The Princess of Wales, who had been present the whole time, would stay it out to know the numbers, and so remained in her place in the gallery. The Speaker very significantly

[1] *Diary*, 20 January, 1808.

[2] This door is figured in the body of Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*, which, with the additional plates, is the most valuable pictorial representation of the Palace, as it existed a century ago.

called several times for strangers to withdraw ; which she defied, and sat on. At last the little fellow became irritated, started from his chair, and, looking up plump in the faces of her and her female friend, halloaed out most fiercely, 'If there are any strangers in the House they must withdraw.' They being the only two, they struck and withdrew." [1]

After the triumphant return of the Tory party from the polls in 1812 Abbot was unanimously re-elected to the Chair ; but a speech which he delivered at the Bar of the House of Lords in the course of the following year brought upon him a motion of censure by Lord Morpeth, on account of his having introduced into it the subject of Roman Catholic aggression. After mention of the supplies granted, the financial measures adopted, and anticipations of future prosperity, the Speaker went on to say, in a passage which immediately aroused the hostility of the Opposition :—

" But, sir, these are not the only subjects to which our attention has been called. Other monstrous charges have been proposed for our consideration. Adhering, however, to those laws by which the Throne, the Parliament, and the Government of this country are made fundamentally Protestant, we have not consented to allow that those who acknowledge a foreign jurisdiction should be authorised to administer the powers and jurisdiction of this realm ; willing as we are, nevertheless, and willing as I trust we ever shall be, to allow the largest scope to religious toleration."

After a heated debate, Lord Morpeth's motion was defeated by 274 to 106.

[1] *Creevey Papers*, Vol. I, p. 123.

"I remarked," says the Speaker in his diary, "to Lord Castlereagh, Vansittart, and Bathurst that the House had repeatedly refused to instruct the Speaker what he should say; that they left it to him to collect the sense of the House from its proceedings; and that as to pleasing everybody I had long ago given up that attempt."

The earliest speech made by any Speaker which is recorded in the Journals of the House of Lords is one of Sir Thomas Englefield in 1509–10. At first the entries only state the general substance of the Speaker's remarks, but in the reign of Elizabeth some are given by Sir Symonds D'Ewes at greater length. There is a speech of Speaker Lenthall, in 1641, given in some detail, and several more in the reign of Charles II. In 1689 two such speeches are entered in the Journals, but none during the reigns of William III or Anne. There are four by Sir Spencer Compton in the reign of George I, and one in the Commons Journals. From 1721 there is no prorogation speech entered at length in either Journal, except one by Speaker Onslow in 1745 reviewing the whole state of public affairs both in and out of Parliament.

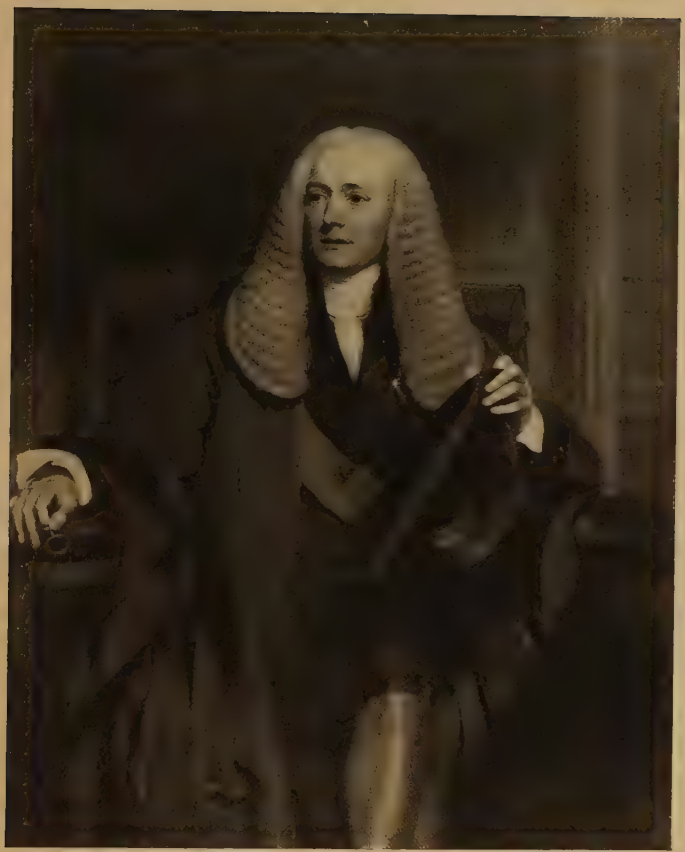
Abbot died in Spring Gardens on 8 May, 1829, and was buried without a monument, by the side of his mother, in Westminster Abbey, the first Speaker to be so honoured since Trussell, Puckering, and Richardson, and also the last in the Abbey's roll of fame. His portrait, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, is one of the ornaments of the Speaker's collection.

The name is now reached of the only man who has ever been Speaker seven times, though his actual tenure of office was exceeded in length by both Arthur Onslow and Shaw-Lefevre. This was Charles Manners-Sutton,

a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury who crowned George IV. But for his open connection with the Tory party outside the House he would undoubtedly have been re-elected an eighth time in 1835. Such an exceptional Parliamentary career deserves somewhat detailed examination. Manners-Sutton was originally intended for the Law. He entered Parliament for the first time in November, 1806, shortly after the death of Fox, and when the Ministry of "All the Talents" was hastening to its close to be replaced by the Duke of Portland as the nominal head of the Tory party.

At the time of his entering the House young Manners-Sutton was living in Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, and though he never had very much practice at the Bar, his commanding voice and presence soon attracted the attention of his fellow-members, and especially of Castlereagh, George Canning, and Spencer Perceval. As became the son of an archbishop, his maiden speech was made on the Clergy Residence Bill, introduced by himself.[1] A little later on he was found supporting the retention of flogging in the army. At the early age of twenty-seven he had been made Judge Advocate-General, and was speaking as the mouthpiece of the Government. In 1812 he made a forcible speech in opposition to Lord Morpeth's motion for inquiry into the state of Ireland, veiling the demand for Catholic Emancipation. It was a long debate, and Grattan did not rise to address the House until four in the morning,

[1] "There was no point," he said, "in which so much improvement had taken place in the last twenty years as in the arrangements for the examination of candidates for Holy Orders."



H. W. Pickersgill, R.A. *Samuel Cousins, sculpt.*

HENRY CHARLES MANNERS-SUTTON
1817, 1819, 1820, 1826, 1830, 1831, 1833
From a print

nor did it adjourn until half-past five, after defeating Lord Morpeth's motion by a majority of ninety-four.

Five years later Manners-Sutton's reputation was so well established, that on the resignation of Speaker Abbot, in June, 1817, little surprise was expressed when he was put forward by the Ministry of the day to fill the vacant Chair. The Opposition proposed C. W. Williams Wynn, the member for Merionethshire, who was heavily handicapped by a high falsetto voice, and in the *Creevey Papers* there is a complimentary reference to the successful candidate in the contest.

"We all like our new Speaker most extremely; he is gentlemanlike and obliging. The would-be Speaker [1] (*alias* Squeaker) has, as I suppose you have heard, moved down to my old anti-Peace of Amiens bench. I rejoice sincerely that I did not vote for said Squeaker, but some of those who did are, I hear, very much ashamed of themselves for it." [2]

Mr. Wynn's brother, Sir Watkin, was also a member of the House, and from the peculiarity of their voices the two were commonly known as "Bubble and Squeak." At the election referred to Manners-Sutton had been chosen by a majority of one hundred votes, and some spiteful wit said that if Williams Wynn had minded his P's and Q's he might have been Speaker instead of Squeaker! Once in the Chair, not even the most bitter Radical found cause to complain of the Speaker's partiality. He "rode the House with a snaffle rein, and not with a curb," as one of his political opponents remarked. Some colour is lent to his understanding of the changing

[1] Wynn.
[2] Lord Folkestone to Creevey, 23 February 1818.

relations between the House and the Chair by the fact that when he intervened in the debates in Committee on the Catholic Relief Bill of 1825, he prefaced his remarks with an apology for joining in the discussions. In 1827, in Canning's Administration, he could have been Home Secretary for the asking, but he preferred to remain where he was.

Tom Moore's *Diary* for May, 1829, reveals a glimpse of Manners-Sutton's private life in the old official residence on the banks of the Thames. Daniel O'Connell, the "Liberator," had made a dramatic appearance at the Bar of the House, to claim the seat for Clare denied to him as a Roman Catholic, a circumstance which convinced the Duke of Wellington that Catholic Emancipation could not be much longer delayed.

"Went to the House of Commons early, having begged Mr. Speaker yesterday to put me on the list for under the gallery. An immense crowd in the lobby, Irish agitators, etc.; got impatient and went round to Mr. Speaker, who sent the train-bearer to accompany me to the lobby, and after some little difficulty I got in. The House enormously full. O'Connell's speech good and judicious. Sent for by Mrs. Manners-Sutton at seven o'clock to have some dinner; none but herself and daughters, Mr. Lockwood, and Mr. Sutton. Amused to see her in all her state, the same hearty, lively Irishwoman still. Walked with her in the garden; the moonlight rising on the river, the boats gliding along it, the towers of Lambeth rising on the opposite bank, the lights of Westminster Bridge gleaming on the left; and then, when we turned round to the House, that beautiful, Gothic structure, illuminated from within, and at that moment containing within it the council of the nation—all was most picturesque and striking."

The Speaker's second wife, a Miss Ellen Power, from the county of Waterford, was only a recent bride at the time of Moore's visit. His first wife was Miss Denison, of the Nottinghamshire family which gave another Speaker to the House in after years.

The worst fault that could be laid to Manners-Sutton's charge was that he was never able wholly to dissociate himself from old party ties and obligations. Lord Grey has left it on record that as early as 1831 the opponents of Reform met at a party at the Speaker's house to discuss the plan of campaign, and "looked with confidence to its affording them the means of striking an effectual blow at the Administration" whenever the question should come before the House.

On Lord Grey's resignation in May, 1832, whilst the Duke of Wellington was endeavouring to form an administration, a short-lived intrigue was got up to offer the post of Prime Minister to Manners-Sutton. The idea seems to have originated with Lord Lyndhurst, aided and abetted by Vesey Fitzgerald and Arbuthnot. Peel, if we may believe Greville, also favoured the scheme, and, animated by a singular mixture of ambition and caution, he desired to make Manners-Sutton a second Addington, whilst he was to be another Pitt. But at a meeting held at Apsley House, at which Peel was not present, Manners-Sutton made a bad impression. He "talked infernal nonsense" for three hours, and Lyndhurst and the Duke were convinced of the impossibility of forming a Government under such leadership. The idea, so hastily conceived, was as promptly abandoned. As all the world knows, the Duke of Wellington declined to take office, and Lord Grey returned.

Nettled perhaps at the turn of events, Manners-Sutton intimated to the House his wish to retire.[1] A vote of thanks was accorded to him, and his pension of £4000 a year settled.

Merely to state that Speaker Manners-Sutton saw the Reform Bill of 1832 carried through all its stages would be to give a very inadequate idea of the strain imposed upon his physical powers and those of the responsible officers of the House. From 1830 the length of the sittings of the Commons went up with a bound. In that year the hours after midnight totalled 126; in 1831 they rose to 156; and in 1832, the crucial year, they amounted to no less than 223, a figure never exceeded or approached until 1881, when, at the beginning of the serious agitation for Home Rule in Ireland, they reached the unprecedented total of 238, a figure only since exceeded in the memorable session of 1887, when Speaker Peel was in the Chair. When, at last, in June, 1832, exactly five hundred years after the generally accepted date of the separation of the two Houses,[2] Manners-Sutton went up to the House of Lords to hear the Royal Assent given to Bills agreed upon by both Houses, it was to the provisions of a measure more far-reaching in its after effects upon English political life than any embodied in a statute of the realm since the origin of Parliaments.

When Reform was carried the Whig leaders played into the Speaker's hands. Nervous at the prospect of meeting the first Parliament to be elected under the new system, they implored Manners-Sutton to serve yet

[1] 30 July, 1832.
[2] 1332.

another term of office. Lord Althorp wrote him what Greville calls " a very flummery letter," and he accepted the offer.[1] On 29 January, 1833, he was voted to the Chair by 210 votes over Edward John Littleton,[2] who was put forward as a candidate by the Radicals. In the course of the year the King conferred upon him the Order of the Bath, an honour not enjoyed by any of his predecessors since Speaker Compton.[3]

Manners-Sutton was rather short-sighted, and when the new Parliament assembled, like the strong party man that he was, he affected not to be able to distinguish the new Whig members' faces, nor to remember their names. When he had to call on Mr. Bulteel to speak he made a great pretence of looking at the name through his glass before he cried out, " Mister Bull Tail," at which the House laughed loud and long. One of the first of the new members returned in the Tory interest was the young representative of the Duke of Newcastle's pocket borough of Newark—William Ewart Gladstone.

" The first time," he wrote to a correspondent many years later, " that business required me to go to the arm of the Chair to say something to the Speaker, Manners-Sutton—the first of seven whose subject I have been—who was something of a Keate, I remember the revival in me bodily of the frame of mind in which the schoolboy stands before his master."

Mr. Gladstone had been at Eton under Dr. Keate, and

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, 11 January, 1833.

[2] Afterwards Lord Hatherton.

[3] " At Court yesterday, the Speaker was made a Knight of the Bath, to his great delight. It is a reward for his conduct during the session, in which he has done Government good and handsome service." (*Greville Memoirs*, 5 September, 1833.)

he retained a lively recollection of the methods of persuasion favoured by that well-known advocate of the birch. He took his seat in January, 1833, in the old House of Commons, which was soon afterwards to be destroyed by fire. On his first entry into Parliament the future Prime Minister took rooms in Jermyn Street, lodging over the shop of a corn-chandler named Crampern, a few doors west of York Street, St. James's Square. The corn-chandler in question was a relation of some of his constituents at Newark. Removing soon after to the Albany, Mr. Gladstone retained a lifelong partiality for St. James's, and during the session of 1890 he lived at No. 10, St. James's Square, the former home of Chatham. Lord Derby, the "Rupert of Debate," lived in the same house from 1837 to 1854.[1]

Lord John Russell admitted in after years that he had supported the candidature of Manners-Sutton in 1833 because he felt exceedingly solicitous and somewhat diffident concerning the reformed House of Commons. For the purpose of securing the advantage of his long experience he was willing to depart from the general rule that the Speaker should be the representative of the majority. During Manners-Sutton's last term of office Sir Thomas Erskine May, the greatest authority on Parliamentary Procedure that the House has ever known, first became officially connected with the Commons. Placed at first in the library, he undertook, whilst a mere youth, the enormous labour of indexing the whole series of Journals

[1] The London County Council has recently placed a memorial tablet on the front of the house to commemorate its association with the names of three Prime Ministers. Mr. Gladstone personally informed the present writer of the circumstances attending his early connection with the neighbourhood.

from the year 1547 to the reign of Queen Anne. As an illustration of the changed habits of the House within his personal recollection, Sir Thomas Erskine May told the present writer that he remembered the Speaker leaving the Chair, some time in the 'thirties, followed by the great majority of members, and proceeding in haste to the riverside in order to watch the race for Doggett's Coat and Badge as it passed by Westminster. There was then a pleasant garden, fringed with tall trees on the river bank, attached to the Speaker's house.

The most memorable incident of Manners-Sutton's last Speakership was the destruction of the old Houses of Parliament by fire on 16 October, 1834. The Speaker was with his family at Brighton at the time, recuperating his energies after the fatigues of the session. Recalled by an express, he arrived in town the next morning to find the flames still raging and his own house a smoking heap of ruins. Having witnessed the destruction of the whole Palace, with the exception of Westminster Hall, the Star Chamber, and a few unimportant exceptions, it was suggested to him that it was his duty to write to the King, informing him of the actual state of affairs, so far as it was in his power to form a judgment; the more so as, by the gracious permission of the Crown, he was living in a portion of a royal palace. He waited upon the King at St. James's to discuss the expedients necessary to secure another place of meeting for the Parliament. William IV commanded him to survey Buckingham House and its gardens, with a view to the erection of a temporary building, and to take Blore, the royal architect, with him. It is necessary to mention these facts because his interviews with the King at this period were

later on made the foundation of a groundless charge against his conduct in the Chair.

During the great fight to save Westminster Hall from the flames the Speaker's house was stripped of its contents, and even the furniture, china and mirrors, were thrown out of the windows. The official residence of Mr. Ley, the Clerk of the House, fared even worse, everything in it being destroyed, even to his wig and gown. It was one of the many misfortunes of that calamitous night that the tide was very low throughout the earlier hours of the conflagration, so that the floating fire-engines on the Thames were unable to render any service during the time when by their help the spread of the flames might have been checked. A strong south-west wind blew the fire into the heart of the ancient buildings, and added to the fears of the bystanders that the Great Hall would be destroyed. So great was the glare in the heavens that the King and Queen saw it at Windsor, twenty miles away. Thus perished in a single night the historic chamber replete with memories of Raleigh, Hampden, Coke, and Cromwell; the arena in which Chatham delivered his immortal eloquence; where Pulteney and Walpole, Pitt and Fox, Canning and Brougham, in turn confronted one another; where Burke threw down the dagger, and Castlereagh walked proudly to his seat with the Treaty of Paris in his hand.

"By the Clerk's table in that ancient chapel the brow of the boldest warrior had grown pale as he stood up to receive the thanks of the House and a grateful nation. There Blake and Marlborough, and that hero of a hundred fights, the Duke of Wellington, drank in the pealing applause which foreshadowed Westminster Abbey, and

there the noblest sons of genius, Bacon, Newton, Addison, and Gibbon sat 'mute but not inglorious.' Its historic walls rang with the shout of triumph when the slave trade went down in its iniquity; there Grattan poured forth his matchless eloquence, and Meredith and Romilly pleaded, against capital punishments, that criminals still were men." [1]

After the fire it became necessary further to prorogue Parliament, and if ever a prorogation took place under difficulties it was this one, owing to the difficulty of finding any habitable room in the precincts of the Palace in which to perform the ceremony. An eye-witness of the scene wrote:—

"The two Mr. Leys (the Clerk of the House and the second Clerk Assistant) called on Saturday. They desired Mr. Rickman to attend the Prorogation because they have lost their wigs, and Mr. William Ley says: 'We shall follow you to the Bar in plain clothes, but where the Bar is to be we know not.'"

When the Houses met again in 1835 it was in temporary chambers hastily improvised for the occasion. The House of Lords was installed in a room on the site of the Painted Chamber, and the Commons in an apartment to the south of Westminster Hall improvised out of the ruins of the House of Lords. Gladstone made his maiden speech in the old chapel of St. Stephen's, but Disraeli's "The time will come when you shall hear me" was uttered in the temporary building in use until 1852.

After Lord Melbourne's summary dismissal by the King,[2] Sir Robert Peel undertook to form an administra-

[1] Townsend's *Memoirs of the House of Commons*, 1844, Vol. II, p. 465.

[2] In November, 1834.

tion, and, though unsuccessful in obtaining a majority at the polls, he pluckily determined to face Parliament, and allowed it to be known that it was his intention once more to propose Manners-Sutton for the Chair. Grave charges were circulated against the late Speaker in the Press and on the platform, some of them undoubtedly founded upon fact, whilst others were devoid of any solid foundation. For weeks before the date fixed for the opening of the session the newspapers were filled with arguments for and against Manners-Sutton's claim to the renewed confidence of the House.

Great excitement prevailed as to the issue of the coming contest for the Chair, but Manners-Sutton waited patiently and submissively under imputations affecting his honesty and integrity until such time as he could refute them in his place. The *gravamen* of the accusations of his enemies was that, being Speaker, he had busied himself in the subversion of Lord Melbourne's Government, that he had assisted, with others, in the formation of the new Cabinet, and that he had advised the dissolution of the late Parliament for party purposes.

Charles Greville, who, though he never entered Parliament, was perhaps better informed than any man of his time as to the secret springs of politics, has left a vivid picture of the intense interest excited by the promulgation of these charges against the late Speaker. He made a book on the event, and having at first favoured the chances of Manners-Sutton, he eventually leant to the side of his opponent and made £55 by backing his opinion.

On 19 February, 1835, the opening day of the session,

SPEAKER MANNERS-SUTTON "MAKE WAY FOR MR. SPEAKER"

Manners-Sutton replied to his accusers in the fullest House ever known. The first charge, he was able to show, grew out of the fact (alluded to on a previous page) that he had been commanded by the King to attend him during the autumn, and he read a letter which he had addressed to His Majesty proving that it had reference solely to the burning of the Houses of Parliament. To the second and graver charge he admitted that he had been in communication with the Duke of Wellington during Peel's absence abroad, and that, on the latter's return, he had paid him a visit at the Prime Minister's own request. The only other occasion on which he visited Peel was when he waited on him for the purpose of obtaining the sanction and signature of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to make good the payment of the Clerks of the House.

"He had never advised, had never suggested, never was in any way consulted, and he never knew of the appointment of any one individual member of the Government until after it had taken place. He admitted, however, that he did attend the meeting of the Privy Council after William IV had dismissed Lord Melbourne. So little did he know of the last charge, that of having counselled a dissolution, that he did not attend the meeting of the Privy Council from which the proclamation for dissolution emanated.

"He was not at it, he was not summoned to it, he was never consulted with regard to it, he never had anything to do with the dissolution, and so little did he know of the steps that had been taken, that he did not even know it had been resolved upon, until he read it in the *Gazette*."

Lord John Russell, in spite of these emphatic dis-

claimers, insinuated that for Manners-Sutton to have attended any meeting of the Privy Council at such a juncture was conduct unbecoming the Speaker of the House of Commons. Versed as Lord John was in the dead lore of the Constitution, he quoted from speeches made by Sir Harbottle Grimston and Mr. Speaker Williams in the seventeenth century, with a view to showing that if Manners-Sutton was elected, and the majority of the House gave up its right for the sake of a compliment, they might say farewell to the choosing of a Speaker for all time; but, as Peel was quick to remark, Lord John must have selected his precedent when he thought that the charge of having counselled a dissolution could be proved, for the only part of his speech which extorted the faintest cheer from the House was that in which it was insinuated that, if he should be re-elected, the Speaker would do as he had done before.

Although Manners-Sutton had completely vindicated himself, the combination of Whigs, Radicals, and the Irish members under Daniel O'Connell carried the election of Abercromby, in the fullest House ever known, by the narrow majority of ten votes. It cannot be said that the Whigs triumphed out of their turn, for they had not had a Speaker of their own political complexion since Arthur Onslow's distinguished rule. Grenville, though he came of a Whig stock, was a supporter of Pitt when called to the Chair in 1789, and to all intents and purposes a member of the Tory fold.

"The great battle is over," wrote Greville on 20 February, "and the Government defeated by 316 to 306. Such a division never was known before in the House of

Commons, and the accuracy of the calculations is really surprising. Mulgrave told me three days ago that they had 317 people, which with the Teller makes the exact number.

"Holmes went over the other list and made it 307, also correct. In the House so justly had they reckoned, that when the numbers first counted (306) were told to Duncannon in the lobby, he said: 'Then we shall win by 10.' Burdett and Cobbett went away, which with Tellers makes a total of 626 members in the House. All the Irish members voted but four, all the Scotch but three, and all the English but 25. The Irish and Scotch, in fact, made the majority."

So disappeared Manners-Sutton from the Commons. He spoke but seldom in the House of Lords, though he lived for ten years after his ungenerous dismissal from the Chamber he had ruled so wisely and so well.

The only Speaker who ever came from north of the Tweed was James Abercromby, third son of General Sir Ralph Abercromby. Nicknamed by Brougham "Young Cole," in contradistinction to Tierney, "Old Cole," he had sat in the House for over a quarter of a century without attracting much attention or making many enemies. Creevey, indeed, calls him, in 1809, "as artificial as the devil," and a few years later "factious and violent," but the censure seems to have been undeserved. His career in the Chair was not marked by any incidents calling for the display of those higher qualities by which the office of Speaker acquires importance in emergencies. If he did not succeed in entirely repressing the tendency to disorder in the House which had grown up under the somewhat lax rule of Manners-Sutton in his later years, his impartiality was never called in question. His chief claim to remembrance rests upon his unremitting efforts

to reform the conduct of the private business of the House.

Before Abercromby's time the passage of a Private Bill through the Commons was attended with much jobbing and confusion, and he succeeded in placing some salutary restrictions upon the expenses attending the promotion of many useful measures of routine. On the occasion of his re-election, on 7 November, 1837, he was proposed by his successor in the Chair—Mr. Charles Shaw-Lefevre. Abercromby was treated with marked rudeness by William IV, who took every opportunity of showing his resentment at the treatment of Manners-Sutton in 1835, and his general distrust of the Whigs.

" Tavistock told me a day or two ago that His Majesty's ministers are intolerably disgusted at his behaviour to them and his studied incivility to everybody connected with them. The other day the Speaker was treated by him with shocking rudeness at the drawing-room. He not only took no notice of him, but studiously overlooked him while he was standing opposite, and called up Manners-Sutton and somebody else to mark the difference by extreme graciousness to the latter. Seymour, who was with him as Serjeant-at-Arms, said he had never seen a Speaker so used in the five-and-twenty years he had been there, and that it was most painful. The Speaker asked him if he had ever seen a man in his situation so received at Court.

" Since he has been Speaker the King has never taken the slightest notice of him. It is monstrous, equally undignified and foolish." [1]

Speaker Abercromby, on his retirement in 1839, was created Lord Dunfermline, with a pension of £4000.

[1] *The Greville Memoirs*, 15 July, 1835.

John Jackson, R.A. *Wm. Walker*

JAMES ABERCROMBY
1835, 1837
From a print

There is a portrait of him in the collection at Westminster. He wrote a memoir of his father, Sir Ralph Abercromby, published, after Lord Dunfermline's death, in 1861.

The first Lord Monteagle, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Melbourne Administration,[1] had set his heart on the Speaker's Chair, and when Abercromby informed Lord Melbourne of his wish to resign, the then Prime Minister virtually promised Spring-Rice the reversion of the place, but finding that he would not be acceptable to the Radicals, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre was preferred in order to maintain the unity of the party. With the appointment of the latter, in 1839, the evolution of the non-partisan Speaker was all but complete. Born in London in February, 1794, the eldest son of a Hampshire squire, Shaw-Lefevre was predestined to become one of the most conspicuous successes in the Chair whom the House of Commons has ever known. His father, a man of tall and imposing figure, though of somewhat pompous manners, entered Parliament in 1796, and elicited from Canning the somewhat malicious remark that " there are only two great men in the world, Shah Abbas and Shaw-Lefevre." After being educated at Winchester and at Trinity College, Cambridge, the son was destined for the Bar by his father.

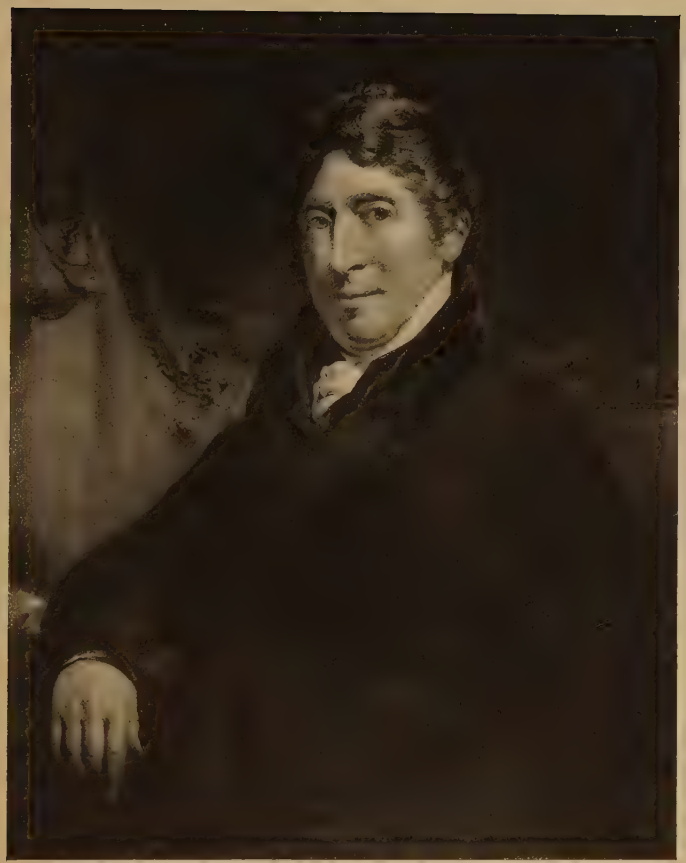
In 1819 he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, but though by no means idle, his heart was in the healthy pursuits of a country gentleman rather than in the mysteries of the law. So keen a sportsman and so accomplished a shot did he become that his father once regretfully observed, " As for Charles, he is only fit to be a game-

[1] Thomas Spring-Rice.

keeper." After his father's death the young squire acquired a definite position in the county as a magistrate, a member of quarter sessions, and an officer of yeomanry. But he was perhaps even better known as the best shot in all that sporting county. In 1830, through the influence of a relative, Lord Radnor, he was put forward as the Whig candidate for the pocket borough of Downton, a seat which he soon exchanged[1] for his own county of Hants. He attracted the favourable notice of Lord Althorp, who asked him to move the Address at the opening of the session of 1834. Like his father before him, Shaw-Lefevre applied himself to the study of the rules and practice of the House, and to those useful but modest labours on Committees, which do so much to train the mind of the young member.

By 1837 his position was so far established that he was selected to propose Abercromby for re-election to the Chair. Two years later Abercromby suddenly retired, and Lord Eversley used, in after years, to relate how, standing behind the chair surrounded by a group of county members, one of the number said to him, "Now, Lefevre, we mean to have *you* as our Speaker." The friendly jest was found to express the general sentiment of the country gentlemen in the ministerial ranks. Ministers who had hitherto favoured the claims of Spring-Rice were forced to defer to the unmistakable desire of the bulk of their supporters. Nature had marked out Shaw-Lefevre as the fittest representative of an assembly of English gentlemen. His manly bearing, his handsome features and frank and open countenance commanded the ready confidence of men of his own class.

[1] i.e. in 1831.



John Jackson, R.A. *Wm. Ward, A.R.A., sculpt.*

CHARLES SHAW LEFEVRE
1839, 1841, 1847, 1852
From a print

On 27 May he was formally proposed for the Chair, though on this occasion his election was not allowed to pass unchallenged. Goulburn, the rival candidate, had had longer experience of the House, had held office under the Crown, and he was, moreover, proposed by the greatest living authority on Parliamentary lore,[1] who had himself been spoken of as not unworthy to fill the post. In form and feature Goulburn presented an infelicitous contrast to his young rival, but, as usually happens in these contests, the ultimate verdict depended upon the relative strength of parties, and Shaw-Lefevre secured a majority of eighteen votes.

From the first his conduct in the Chair won the approval of all parties. He could call unruly members to order with a smile which disarmed anger. He knew how to rule them without giving offence to their *amour propre*. But when he was compelled to exercise a sterner authority his manner could be both resolute and unbending. In his intercourse with men of all shades of opinion he displayed the genial humour of his healthy nature. When twenty members sprang to their feet at once, someone asked him how he contrived to single out his man. "Well," he replied, "I have not been shooting rabbits all my life for nothing, and I have learnt to mark the right one." His firm rule was greatly needed in the stormy times of O'Connell's agitation for the repeal of the Union and during the great debates on the Corn Laws. Re-elected unanimously in 1841,[2] 1847,

[1] Mr. Williams Wynn.

[2] "The Tories were beginning to quarrel about the Speakership, some wanting to oust Lefevre, but the more sensible and moderate, with Peel and the leaders, desiring to keep him. The latter carried

and 1852, he did not finally vacate the Chair he adorned until March, 1857.

The Commons met, experimentally, in the present House on Thursday, 30 May, 1850—whilst it was still in an unfinished state—in order to test the acoustic properties of the building. It might have been so utilised even sooner, but as no provision had been made for artificial warmth, and the season was an unusually cold one, it was deemed prudent to wait for a fine day. Mr. Speaker, accompanied by Sir Robert Peel, so soon to be snatched away from public life and usefulness, took the Chair at twelve o'clock, accompanied by upwards of 200 members. Hume, Cobden, and Bright were amongst those present, and below the Bar Hallam the historian and the architect Barry were provided with seats. The fittings of the House were still incomplete ; there was no stained glass in the windows, no heraldic decoration on the panels, and the benches were nothing but common deal and green baize knocked together with rough-and-ready haste. The primary idea of the architect had been not to produce a great hall, in which 656 gentlemen could lounge at their ease, but rather a compact house of business, in which 200 or 300 working members could enjoy reasonable facilities for transacting the public affairs.

Mr. Wilson Patten was the first member to raise his voice in the new chamber, and Mr. Sullivan, an Irishman,

their point without much difficulty. Peel wrote to four or five and twenty of his principal supporters and asked their opinions. All, except Lowther, concurred in not disturbing Lefevre, and he said that he would not oppose the opinions of the majority. So Peel wrote to Lefevre and gave him notice that he would not be displaced." (*Greville Memoirs*, 10 August, 1841.)

the first to present a petition. This was from the mayor and corporation of Kilkenny, "praying to be relieved from the odious tax of ministers' money." Mr. Gladstone also spoke, and amongst those present on this historic occasion in the annals of Parliament may have been the veteran Earl of Wemyss, now in his ninety-second year, for he was then, as Lord Elcho, a member of the Lower House. Sir Robert Peel took a seat in the galleries, as well as on both sides of the floor, being anxious to ascertain the tone of voice which members who desired to be audible without being noisy should in future adopt. The experiment was not altogether satisfactory, as every one who could, members and strangers alike, entered into loud and earnest conversation with his neighbour. Many groups talked all at once; in vain, therefore, did the orators of the assembly, who affected to debate the questions under consideration, strain their lungs to raise a shout which might be heard above, not the murmurs, but the roar of general conversation. One member, addressing the Speaker from the gallery, said that he did not know whether the Speaker could hear him, but this he knew—that he could not himself hear what was passing on the floor of the House. At three o'clock the Speaker proceeded to the old House of Lords, which had been used by the Commons as a temporary home since the fire, and finished the business of the day there. This was assuredly the only time in its history when the House has occupied two separate chambers on one and the same day.

"Shaw-Lefevre was the best Speaker I ever knew," said Lord John Russell; "when there was not a precedent, he made one," adding, so as to prevent any

further discussion, "according to the well-known practice of the House," a formula which pleased everyone and permitted of no further discussion. This remarkable man maintained his vigour at an age when most men have retired from all outdoor pursuits. He bought a new pair of guns after he had passed his ninetieth birthday. He refused a pension of £2000 a year for two lives on the ground that he could not bear the thought of being a burden to posterity; but he consented to accept £4000 for his own life, and enjoyed it for over thirty years. Lord Eversley's portrait, by Sir Martin Shee, is at the Speaker's House. Up to 1839 every Speaker on taking office had been provided with an ample service of plate, but, on the motion of Hume, the most persistent economist the House has ever known, it was henceforth attached to the office and no longer made personal to the holder.

It is within the knowledge of the writer that Lord Palmerston consulted Delane and asked him informally to adjudicate upon the credentials of the various candidates for the Chair, and they were not few, when, in 1857, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre retired. The qualifications which the editor of *The Times* held to be essential were: (1) imperturbable good temper, tact, patience, and urbanity; (2) a previous legal training, if possible; (3) absence of bitter partisanship in his previous career; (4) the possession of innate gentlemanly feelings which involuntarily command respect and deference; (5) personal dignity in voice and manner. To these indispensable requirements Delane might have added the importance of a sense of humour in the holder of the office, for many a delicate situation has been saved,

especially in recent times, by the Speaker's possessing this precious gift of nature.

It would be invidious to mention the names of other candidates on whose merits Delane was asked to pronounce. But he made no secret of his opinion that the fittest man to succeed Mr. Shaw-Lefevre was Mr. Evelyn Denison, who had sat in the House for more than thirty years, and whose experience of its procedure dated from before the passing of the great Reform Bill. In after years Speaker Denison occasionally wrote in *The Times* for Delane, and one of his contributions to the paper was an article comparing the French legislative assembly with the English House of Commons.

On 7 April Lord Palmerston wrote as follows :—

"My dear Denison,

"We wish to be allowed to propose you for the Speakership of the House of Commons. Will you agree ?"

On the 30th of the same month he was unanimously chosen. The retiring Speaker, when asked if there was any one whom he could call to his assistance in a difficulty, said, "No one ; you must learn to rely entirely upon yourself." "I spent the first few years of my Speakership like the captain of a steamer on the Thames," Denison wrote in his interesting Journal,[1] "standing on the paddle-box, ever on the look out for shocks and collisions. The House is always kind and indulgent, but it expects its Speakers to be right. If he should be found often tripping, his

[1] First privately printed in 1900, and since re-issued for general circulation.

authority would soon be at an end." Disraeli, in congratulating Denison on his re-election in 1859, spoke of him as combining in his person the purity of an English judge and the spirit of an English gentleman.

He had a great admiration for Palmerston, and when he attended in state the opening of the International Exhibition of 1862 he bore witness to the great popularity which the veteran minister enjoyed with the people. On arriving at South Kensington, taking Lord Charles Russell, the Serjeant-at-Arms, and the mace and his train-bearer with him in his coach, the Speaker had to walk first in the procession; but seeing the Prime Minister, he asked him to accompany him, when Palmerston replied, "No, the Speaker of the House should walk alone; I will follow." And on Denison saying, "I should think it a great honour if we might proceed together," they entered the building side by side.

The moment Lord Palmerston came in sight shouts of welcome were raised: "Palmerston for ever!" and so on throughout the whole building. One voice cried, "I wish you may be Minister for the next twenty years," at which Lord Taunton, who was standing by, drily remarked, "Well, he would only then be a little more than a hundred!" Some men, it has been frequently proved, reach the maturity of their intellect at twenty-one, and some, like Lord Palmerston, the typical statesman of the Victorian era, at seventy-one.

Denison was in the Chair at the time of Lord Derby's and Disraeli's famous "leap in the dark"—the Reform Bill of 1867, the era from which pessimists date the declension of the usefulness of the Lower House, during the

Joseph Slater, delt. *F. C. Lewis, sculpt.*

JOHN EVELYN DENISON
1857, 1859, 1866, 1868
From a print

period of the fiercest strife between Gladstone and his great rival. He was Speaker when the former became the first Minister of the Crown, though he did not live to see Disraeli head a triumphant majority at the polls. Age and ill-health compelled him to resign in 1872, too late, indeed, for his own welfare, for the long-deferred rest did not restore his overtaxed strength, and he died early in the following year. He possessed in an eminent degree the qualities of tact, discrimination, and justice so essential to the successful performance of his duties, and when his epitaph came to be written in the columns of *The Times*, Delane did no more than justice to a friend of many years' standing in causing it to be said of him :—

"As the House of Commons is the home where the English nature exhibits itself with the most absolute reality, Speaker Denison was the clear, unsullied mirror of that simple nobleness which we think Englishmen may claim as the ideal of our national character. Hence it was that he so exactly appreciated the feeling and disposition of the assembly over which he was called upon to preside, the sources to which he could look for aid, and the exact limits and sphere of his authority. He knew also that English gentlemen possessed, as he did, an unusual aptitude to conform to the spirit of traditionary law. He knew that hence he could rely for support on all who sat around him." [1]

[1] It was Delane's practice periodically to revise the obituary notices of public men which he kept ready standing in type, "necrologies awaiting their victims," as he called them. He took them home with him and made additions and alterations within his personal knowledge, during the brief intervals of leisure which he permitted himself at Ascot Heath. In this way the admirably lucid biography of Disraeli, though not required until 1881, eighteen months after his own death, was mainly his own work.

In view of recent occurrences affecting the relations of the two Houses, it may not be inappropriate to remark that when the House of Lords rejected the Bill for the repeal of the paper duty in May, 1860, Speaker Denison denounced in energetic language a practice by which he considered that the Upper House indirectly infringed on the special function of the Commons—the grant of public money—as one calculated to break down the broad line of distinction between the duties and powers of the two Chambers.

It often becomes the duty of the Speaker to decide, on the spur of the moment, what is and what is not a Parliamentary expression. Mr. Denison was appealed to in 1864 by Mr. Layard, then Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the House being in a very excited state at the time, to know whether it was competent for another member[1] to say that he had made " calumnious charges " against the Opposition. The Speaker said that he saw no ground for his intervention, whereon Mr. Gladstone looked reproachfully at the Chair and urged Lord Palmerston to get up. The Prime Minister then rose and said that, in his opinion, the imputation of motives was hardly in order, and that the expression used implied motives. A long discussion ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli, amongst others, took part, but before the incident closed the Speaker was reminded by Mr. Otway that Mr. Layard, of all people, should remember something about the use of the word " calumnious " in the House, for he had been accused of making false and calumnious charges in the year 1845, and by

[1] Mr. Gathorne Hardy, afterwards Earl of Cranbrook.

no other than the noble lord who had just spoken. And on Hansard being referred to, it appeared that though Lord Palmerston, at Mr. Gladstone's request, was protesting in 1864 against the use of the phrase, he had applied the very same words to charges made by the same Mr. Layard nearly twenty years before. Lord Eversley, on his attention being called to the expression, gave it as his opinion that "calumnious" was not a word to which exception could be taken. Since that date at least one Speaker has had constantly by his side for ready reference a list of admissible Parliamentary expletives. From time to time new adjectives and nouns have to be adjudicated upon; but it is within the discretion of the Chair to determine how far they must be taken with the context and the circumstances of the moment, since it is quite possible for a word to be used in a manner calculated to give offence which, on another occasion, would pass without objection from any quarter of the House.

It has sometimes been said that nearly every Parliamentary contingency which can possibly arise has had its antecedent parallel, and is accordingly governed by a precedent, so that a Speaker cannot go far astray in a decision if he be thoroughly acquainted with the forms and procedure of the House and the rulings of his predecessors. But this is no longer strictly accurate. Formerly it was customary to give the Speaker notice of questions on points of order, but of late years the occasions have been numerous when the most weighty decisions have been required to be taken by the Chair on its being suddenly confronted with an absolutely unprecedented situation. In the case of the last three occupants of the Chair

these decisions have required, in addition to exceptional tact, firmness, and courage, the prompt exercise of that peculiar authority which the confidence and respect of the House at large can alone confer. It is no exaggeration to say that the difficulties which Speakers Shaw-Lefevre and Denison, both of them admittedly strong and able men, had to contend with have increased tenfold since their day of power, owing to a multiplicity of causes which have fundamentally changed the temper and spirit of the House of Commons. Within the last twenty years the control and initiative in legislation have gradually been passing from the House to the executive Government—in other words, to the Cabinet, or a committee of that body which usually dominates the Cabinet considered as a whole.

Changes in the composition of the House, rendered inevitable by the "leap in the dark" of 1867, accentuated by Mr. Gladstone's Franchise Act of 1884; the claims of labour to separate representation and organisation successfully asserted in recent years; the categorical demand by a majority of the representatives of Ireland for separation from the parent assembly, a demand annually restated, in spite of the abortive offers of settlement in 1886 and 1893; the formation of small subsidiary parties acting independently of the official whips; the heavy strain of practically continuous sessions; the altered rules of procedure all tending to enhance the power of the Government of the day at the expense of the independent member; and, lastly, the application of the closure at the discretion of the Chair—all these have increased the ever-growing responsibilities of the Speaker.

When Speaker Denison presided over the House the practice of addressing questions to ministers was in its infancy, whereas at the present day the printed interrogatories to the Government on every conceivable topic of public and private interest run into thousands in the course of a single session, to say nothing of those, often the most difficult to deal with, which are sprung upon the attention of the Chair without notice. Mr. Denison was the last Speaker to exercise his right of speaking and voting in Committee. He had no liking for the financial methods of Mr. Lowe, and on 9 June, 1870, on a Budget proposal of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, he formed one of a majority of four which inflicted a defeat on the Government. By a singular coincidence Mr. Speaker Abbot, who was strongly opposed to the removal of Catholic disabilities, carried an amendment in Committee in 1813 by the same narrow majority. The amendment was to omit the vital words " to sit and vote in either House of Parliament " from Grattan's Bill qualifying Roman Catholics for election as members of Parliament.

The Speakers of the House of Commons have not, on the whole, been conspicuous for literary ability. The notorious Dudley, as has been mentioned on an earlier page, wrote the *Tree of Commonwealth* during his imprisonment in the Tower. With this exception, a few volumes of law reports, of which the most notable example is that of Sir Edward Coke, and the writings of the great Sir Thomas More, whose *Utopia* will never die, are the only contributions to periodical literature emanating from the pen of a Speaker. Bulstrode Whitelocke was a painstaking and accurate historian, and Harley was a successful

pamphleteer before he became a minister of the Crown. Sir Thomas Hanmer was a conscientious Shakespearean critic, and his predecessor, Speaker Bromley, wrote an amusing volume of travels. But both in fiction and poetry the Chair is otherwise unrepresented.

Speaker Denison, however, deserves to be remembered for his painstaking share in the field of Biblical criticism, known to posterity as the *Speaker's Commentary*. So impressed was he with the necessity that existed for an explanation of the Bible in accordance with the spirit of the age in which he lived, and the scientific knowledge accumulated during the nineteenth century, that he induced Archbishop Thomson of York and over forty other scholars and Biblical students to engage in the production of what is still recognised as a valuable book of reference. The Archbishop wrote the historical introduction to the whole work, which Denison, unfortunately, did not live to see completed.

On his retirement from the Chair in 1872, though he accepted a Peerage[1] Mr. Denison refused to accept the customary pension of £4000. "Though without any pretensions to wealth," he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, "I have a private fortune which will suffice, and for the few years of life which remain to me I should be happier in feeling that I am not a burden to my fellow-countrymen." There is a portrait of Lord Ossington, by Sir Francis Grant, in the Speaker's House. The official residence at Westminster was first occupied by him, and his coat of arms is sculptured over the entrance doorway in Speaker's Court.

[1] An honour conferred on every Speaker since Lord Colchester. The title which he selected was that of Viscount Ossington.

Having now reached a period in the history of the Speaker's office within the memory of many still living, it will be unnecessary to recapitulate facts which are within the knowledge of all who have studied the history of Parliament and parties during the last half-century. In treating of Mr. Speaker Denison's successors it would be unbecoming in one who, like the present writer, entered the service of the House of Commons when Mr. Speaker Brand still sat in the Chair, to consider in detail the political aspect of questions which await the impartial verdict of a later age—questions, moreover, which are apt to assume such a totally different complexion when viewed from the Government or from the Opposition benches.

When the inflammable and ephemeral matter which feeds the fires of debate has utterly burnt out, and when the sound and fury with which every step of political progress is wont to be discussed has been extinguished by the merciful hand of time, those who dwell on the fertile soil formed by those volcanic upheavals will be in a better position to appraise the ability and boldness, the success or failure, of rival English statesmen, and to recognise at their true value causes which agitated the length and breadth of the Kingdom whilst they were in the making.

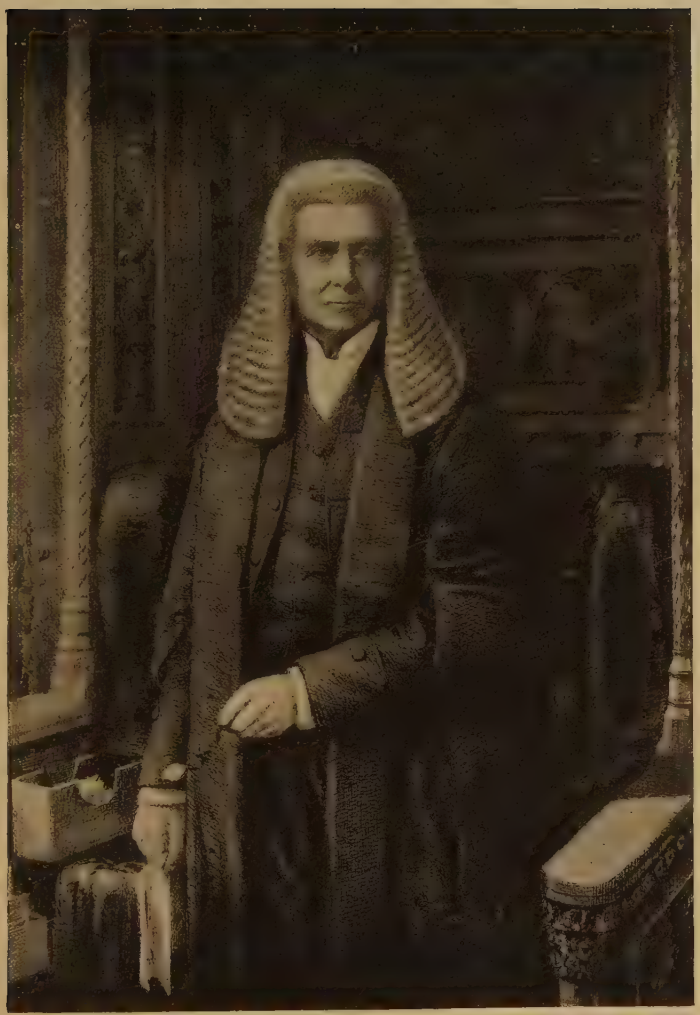
Mr. Brand was three times unanimously called to the Chair, and will be long remembered for his *coup d'état* of February, 1881, when, after a sitting of nearly thirty hours, he declared the state of business to be so urgent as to justify him in summarily closing the debate. The story is told at length by Lord Morley in his *Life of Gladstone*. During this and the following session urgency resolu-

tions were agreed to by the House, by which its powers could, in respect of a particular Bill, be vested in the Speaker, who accordingly laid rules upon the table prescribing the manner in which the Bill should be dealt with. At the same time obstruction was checked by the power given to the Speaker to put the question, "That the question be now put." If this question was agreed to in a House of not less than 200 members, the question was put forthwith without further debate.

Speaker Brand was reputed to have the best French cook in London, Cost by name. The title was disputed by Beguinot, successively *chef* to Lord Granville and his brother, Mr. F. Leveson-Gower, and by Mr. Russell Sturgis's *cordon bleu*. The first of them said "nous sommes trois," and opinions still vary as to their respective merits. Mr. Brand was a man of slight stature, with the fresh pink of a winter apple in his cheeks, of remarkable dignity, and sound judgment, and, though Disraeli was sceptical at the time of his appointment as to the expediency of promoting a former whip, his retirement, in 1884, was received with real regret by the majority of the House. Mr. Brand was once asked if in his long experience of Parliamentary life he had ever known or heard of money passing for the vote of a member. He said: "No, never. The nearest approach to it I have ever known was the finding of a suit of clothes for an M.P. who stated that without them he would be unable to attend the House at a critical division."[1]

Of his successor, Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel, the worthy

[1] *Recollections of Sir Algernon West.*



HENRY BOUVERIE WILLIAM BRAND
1872, 1874, 1880
From an engraving in the possession of the Serjeant-at-Arms after F. Sargent

inheritor of an illustrious Parliamentary name, it will be unnecessary to say more at present than that he maintained to the full the high traditions of the Chair during a period of unexampled difficulty. Such was his command of the House that the mere rustle of his robes, as he rose to rebuke a breach of order, was sufficient to awe the most unruly member into prompt submission to his ruling.[1]

Mr. Speaker Brand's tenure of office will always be regarded as a landmark in the history of Parliamentary institutions, if only for the great change adopted by the House in entrusting the Chair with the power of closure by a bare majority, a necessary change which, more than any other, has tended to aggrandise the power of the Government of the day, though with a corresponding decline in the usefulness and efficiency of the private member.[2]

In 1887, under Mr. Speaker Peel, the Chair was relieved of the initial responsibility for the closure. Power was then conferred upon any member to move that the question be now put, the Chair being directed to put such question forthwith, unless the rights of the minority seemed to him to be infringed or the rules of the House abused. One hundred members must now vote in the majority to make the motion effective. When the motion for closure has been carried, and the question on

[1] Mr. Gladstone had offered the post, in the first instance, to the late Lord Goschen, who felt himself obliged to decline the honour on account of defective eyesight.

[2] The principle of closure of debate, first adopted in 1882, was never actually put in practice until February, 1885, when Mr. Speaker Peel was in the Chair. In March, 1888, the Chair was invested with increased powers for maintaining order and checking irrelevancy in debate, while a fixed hour for the adjournment of the House, subject to certain exceptions, was also agreed to.

which it has been moved has been decided, any question already proposed from the Chair may be put forthwith without a further closure motion.

Another innovation designed to facilitate the despatch of business has been the passing of Orders regulating the procedure on certain stages of Bills. These have differed from one another in their scope and severity, but their general object has been to fix the time at which certain stages or parts of a stage should be brought to a conclusion, and to provide a special form of procedure for the summary disposal of that part of the stage which has not been concluded at the prescribed time. As a rule, the "guillotine," as it has come to be called, has taken the form of directing the Chair to put at a prescribed hour the question then under discussion, and to put any questions necessary to dispose of the allotted portion or stage of the Bill without debate, and when amendments are admissible, to put the question only on amendments moved by the Government. Since 1887 this procedure has been adopted occasionally in order to dispose of the necessary supply before the close of the financial year.

Mr. Speaker Peel[1] during his whole term of office kept a diary, which it is to be hoped will one day be given to the world, far exceeding, as it does, in interest similar journals kept by Speaker Denison and Speaker Abbot. From his entry into Parliament, in 1865, Mr. Peel familiarised himself with the features and idiosyncrasies of the members over whom he was one day to be called upon to preside. On one occasion, he told the present writer, he was asked by Mr. Gladstone if he could

[1] Now Viscount Peel of Sandy, Beds.

London Stereoscopic Co.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL
1884, 1886 (2), 1892

tell him the name of a gentleman who had walked into the House and seated himself on the front Opposition bench. For once he was at fault, and, as neither the Speaker,[1] on being applied to, nor the doorkeepers could solve the mystery, a messenger was sent to the intruder to ask his name. It transpired that he had mistaken the House of Commons for the House of Lords (to which assembly he was an infrequent visitor), and had imagined that he was sitting amongst his peers. Mr. Gladstone, whose eagle eye had at once spotted an unfamiliar face, remarked to Mr. Peel that he should have thought the colour of the benches might have suggested to him that he had taken the wrong turning from the Central Hall. An elaboration of this anecdote, for which, however, we do not vouch, was to the effect that, after listening for some time to the debate, the intruder asked his neighbour, in perfect good faith, whether the noble lord who was addressing the House was Lord Salisbury!

Mr. Peel was in the seat of power all through the period of the dynamite outrages which disgraced London and baffled the police in 1884. Once word was brought to him that a desperado, disguised as a woman, had obtained admission to the ladies' gallery immediately above his head, no doubt with the intention of hurling a bomb into the crowded chamber. But fortunately the necessary courage was lacking, and no outrage took place, though it was not without a feeling of relief that the Speaker put the question "That this House do now

[1] Then Mr. Denison.

adjourn" at the conclusion of an anxious sitting. *À propos* of the reign of terror, the present writer has excellent reasons for remembering the dastardly outrage in Westminster Hall on 24 January, 1885, when a bomb was placed on the staircase leading to the crypt by a miscreant who deliberately chose a Saturday for his fiendish purpose, when the Houses of Parliament are usually thronged with visitors. The writer walked through the Hall a few minutes before the perpetration of the outrage, returning later on to find every pane of glass blown out of the great stained window by the terrific force of the explosion, and the Hall itself smoking from end to end with the dust of ages which had been shaken from its rafters.

Of Mr. Speaker Gully it would be unbecoming to speak at any length, owing to his recent untimely decease. Recommended to the attention of the Government in the first instance by the late Lord Herschell, his election to the Chair on April 10, 1895, was the closest contest of the kind ever known, with the exceptions of Harley in December, 1710, and Abercromby in 1835. Whereas Abercromby was successful by ten votes, Mr. Gully received only eleven more than Sir Matthew White-Ridley in 1895. By his winning manner and unfailing courtesy he gained the respect and affection of every quarter of the House during the ten years in which he filled the Chair. In August, 1895, and December, 1900, his re-election was unanimous, nor was he again put to the trouble of a contest at the latter appeal to the country.

There can be no indiscretion in mentioning in these pages that, on the occasion of Mr. Gully's promotion,

Photo. *Russell & Sons*

WILLIAM COURT GULLY
1895 (2), 1900

the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman would have liked to succeed Mr. Peel; but it may not be generally known that, though he was fortified by the opinion of Mr. Gladstone to the effect that ample precedent existed for his projected transference from the ministerial bench, the then ruling powers in the Cabinet thought otherwise, with the result that he stood aside, to attain, in after years, an even more strenuous position in the State. With the advent of Mr. James William Lowther to the Chair of the House of Commons in June, 1905, exactly six hundred years after a member of his family sat as Knight of the Shire for Westmorland,[1] this record perforce ceases, to be taken up hereafter, it may be, by some more skilful hand.

Politicians and parties may come and go, changes may, and must, occur in the aims and aspirations of the democracy of England, which will affect the relations of the House of Commons towards the parent assembly; but the Speaker's office, unfettered by the exigencies of party, and administered in the lofty and impartial spirit which has characterised the later years of its existence, will endure as long as the Constitution itself.

Tradition binds the Commons together with amazing strength, and so long as the peculiar and essential functions of the Chair, in ruling by general consent rather than by compulsion, in upholding freedom of speech without ever allowing it to degenerate into licence, are adhered to by the successors of the great Englishmen whose names have been recorded in these inadequate pages, it is safe to predict that the proud heritage of seven centuries of liberty and progress will be handed

[1] XXXIII Edward I, 1305.

on unimpaired to many future generations of a free and self-governing nation.

In bidding farewell to Westminster and to the " well-ordered inheritance " of the Speaker's Chair, it only remains to add those two words so familiar and so dear to all of Eton's sons—

ESTO PERPETUA

Russell & Sons *Photo*

JAMES WILLIAM LOWTHER
1905, 1906, 1910, 1911

CATALOGUE OF SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY : :

Parliament	*Speaker or other Presiding Officer*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XLII Henry III, 11 June, 1258, at Oxford. The "Mad Parliament"	*Peter de Montfort*	Register Book of St. Alban, Cottonian Library, British Museum, now illegible through damage by fire. Hakewil, 1641, p. 106	
XX Edward II, and 27th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster 7 January, 1326–7	*William Trussell*	Styled Procurator of Parliament in Henry of Knighton's chronicle contained in Twysden's *Decem Scriptores*	
VI Edward III, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 March, 1331–2, "Le lundi prechein apres la Feste de Seint Gregoir."	*Henry Beaumont*	Browne-Willis, and *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 64	
VI Edward III, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 9 September, 1332, "Le Lendemayn de la Nativité N^re^ Dame"	*Sir Geoffrey Le Scrope*	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 66	

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
			Said to have consented "vice totius communitatis" to the banishment of Aymer de Valence, 1259–60. (?) Died 1287. Owned the manor house of Ilmington, Warwickshire, where traces of thirteenth-century work remain.
			One of this name was Knight of the Shire for Leicester in 1314. Buried in Westminster Abbey, *circa* 1346
			"Lesqueux Comtes Barouns & autres Grantz puis revindrent & repondirent touz au Roi par la bouche [de] Monsr Henri de Beaumont"
			Probably the same man who was Chief Justice of the King's Bench from 1324 to 1338, and Secretary to Edward III in 1339. He was a Trier of Petitions as early as 1320. These important officials are first heard of in 1304. *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. I, p. 159. Le Scrope died in 1340

Parliament	*Speaker or other Presiding Officer*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XIV Edward III, and 26th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 29 March, 1340. "Au-jour de meskerdy prochein apres la fest de la Translation de Seint Thomas le Martir"	*William Trussell* again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 118	
XV Edward III, 1341			
XVII Edward III, and 30th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 28 April, 1343. "A la quinzeme de Pask"	*William Trussell* again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 136	
XXI Edward III, 1347	*William de Thorpe*	Elsynge, *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, 164	
XXII Edward III, 1348	*William de Thorpe* again	Elsynge and *Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 200	

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
			Announced a naval victory to the Commons and undertook to raise wools for the King's aid. "Apres grand trete & parlance eue entre les Grantz & les dits Chivalers & autre les Communes"
			"Les ditz Grantz & autres de la Commune qu ils se traissent ensemble, & s'avisent entre eux c'est assaver les grantz de p. eux & les Chivalers des Counteez & Burgeys de p. eux"
			"Et puis vindrent les Chivalers de Counteez et les Communes & responderent p[r] Mons[r] William Trussell [to a communication from the Pope]. The Commons met in the Chambre Depeint or Painted Chamber and the Lords in the Chambre Blanche
		Chief Justice 1346	Elsynge considered that the Chief Justice habitually acted as Speaker *temp.* Edward III, though the cause of summons was occasionally delivered by the Chancellor. Thorpe was a Trier of English and Irish Petitions in 1346
		Baron of the Exchequer, 1352	

Parliament	*Speaker or other Presiding Officer*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXV Edward III, and 36th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 9 February, 1350–51	*William de Shareshull*	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 226	
XXV Edward III, and 37th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 January, 1351–52	*William de Shareshull* again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 237	

In 1354 *William de Shareshull* again declared the cause of summons, and in 1355 he stated that the King was pleased to command the cause to be delivered by Monsieur Walter de Manny, " overtement a totes gentz."

In 1362 the cause of summons was delivered by Monsieur *Henry Green* in *English.*

In 1363 *Sir Henry Green,* Chief Justice, told the Parliament in *English* (in the Painted Chamber) that the King was ready to begin his Parliament, but the cause of summons was subsequently delivered by the Bishop of Ely.

In 1372 the Chancellor, *John Knyvet* (in the Painted Chamber), and the next day *Sir Guy Brian* (in the Chambre Blanche), " more particularly," declared the cause of summons.

L Edward III, 55th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 28 April, 1376	The Chancellor, *John Knyvet,* again declared the cause of summons		

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
		Chief Justice 1350	Pronounced the cause of summons to Parliament and considered by Elsynge to have acted as Speaker. He was a Trier of Petitions from Flanders in 1340
			The Commons now meet in the Chapter House of the Abbey. The Lords in the Chambre Blanche. "Et q le remenant des Communes se trahissent el Chapitre de Westminster." (A committee of the Commons) *Rot.Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 237
			So early as 1347 Walter de Manny had been a Trier of Petitions
		Chief Justice 1361	In 1354 Green acted as a Trier of Petitions for England
		Chancellor of England 1372–77	Died 1381. As early as 1362 Knyvet had been a Trier of Petitions for foreign parts, whilst Brian acted in a similar capacity for England in 1354
			In this Parliament the Commons were under the leadership of Sir Peter de la Mare, though there is no mention in the Rolls of his having been formally elected to the chair.

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
LI Edward III, and 56th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 27 January, 1376–77; sat till 2 March	Sir Thomas Hungerford	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. II, p. 374	January, 1376–7
I Richard II, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 October, 1377	Sir Peter de la Mare	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 5	October, 1377
II Richard II, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Gloucester, 20 October, 1378	Sir James Pickering	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 34	22 October, 1378
III Richard II, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 January, 1379–80	Sir John Guildesborough	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 73	January, 1379–80
IV Richard II, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Northampton, 5 November, 1380	Sir John Guildesborough again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 89	November, 1380
V Richard II, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 September, 1381, and his prorogation, 3 November, 1381	Sir Richard Waldegrave	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 100	18 November, 1381
VI Richard II, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 23 February, 1382–83	Sir James Pickering again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 145	23 February, 1382–83

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
2 March, 1376–7	Wilts		Died 1398 and was buried at Farleigh Hungerford, in the county of Somerset. Described in the Rolls as the "Chivaler qi avoit les paroles pur les Communes d'Engleterre en cest Parlement"
28 Nov., 1377	Hereford		
16 Nov., 1378	Westmorland		See also 1382–83
3 Mar., 1379–80	Essex		Sometimes erroneously called Goldesborough, but he does not appear to have been related to the Yorkshire family of that name
6 Dec., 1380	Essex		
25 Feb., 1381–2	Suffolk		Died 1402. Waldegrave may also have been Speaker in the two next Parliaments, but the Rolls are defective at this period
10 Mar., 1382–3	Yorkshire		He sat in Parliament altogether for thirty-five years

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
From 1383 to 1393 the Rolls of Parliament are defective, and it is not definitely known who was Speaker in Richard II's 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, or 21st Parliament; but as Sir James Pickering sat for Yorkshire in 1384, 1388, 1389–90, and 1390, he probably acted as Speaker in one or more of them.			
XVII Richard II, and 22nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 27 January, 1393–94	Sir John Bussy	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 310	28 Jan., 1393–94
XVIII Richard II, and 23rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 27 January, 1394–95. Sat till 15 February.	Probably Bussy again Speaker, though not mentioned in the Rolls		
XX Richard II, and 24th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 22 January, 1396–97	Sir John Bussy again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 338	22 Jan., 1396–97
XXI Richard II, and 25th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 17 September, 1397, and adjourned to Shrewsbury, 27 January, 1397–98, and sat till 31 January, when it resigned its authority to a Committee of 18, 12 peers and 6 commoners, of whom the Speaker was one	Sir John Bussy again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 357	17 Sept., 1397

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
			VII Richard II, 1384. The Commons are directed to choose a Speaker: "la personne qi'auroit les paroles en cest Parlement pur la Cõe." The cause of summons was delivered by Monsr Michel de la Pole, Chancellor
6 Mar., 1393–94	Lincolnshire		Beheaded 29 July, 1399. He lived at Hougham, near Grantham, and several memorials of his family remain in the parish church. Styled "Commune Parlour" in the Rolls
			The Commons were charged by the Chancellor to assemble either in the Chapter House or the Refectory of Westminster, to choose a Speaker (*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 329)
12 February, 1396–97	Lincolnshire		
31 Jan., 1397–8	Lincolnshire		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXIII Richard II, and 26th Parliament, met 30 September, 1399, but sat only one day to depose the King	None chosen		
I Henry IV, and 1st Parliament, met at Westminster, 6 October, 1399	Sir John Cheyne or Cheney	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 424	14 October, 1399
Ditto	John Dorewood	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 424	15 October, 1399
II Henry IV, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at York, 27 October, 1400, and by prorogation at Westminster, 20 January, 1400–1. [The cause of summons was, however, still declared by the Chief Justice, Sir William Thurning.]	Sir Arnold Savage	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 455	21 Jan., 1400–1
III Henry IV, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 30 January, 1401–02			
III Henry IV, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster (in the Painted Chamber), 15 September, 1402, and by prorogation on 30 September	Sir Henry Redford	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 486	3 October, 140

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
Filled the Chair for only two days	Gloucestershire		(Not mentioned in the *D.N.B.*) Hakewil makes him Speaker again in 1405–6, but this is inaccurate. He was still living in 1409
19 Nov., 1399	Essex		See also 1413
10 March, 1400–01	Kent		Again Speaker in 1403–4, and died in 1410. Memorial brass in Bobbing Church, Kent
			Possibly Savage was again Speaker, but the Rolls do not mention him at this date
5 Nov., 1402	Lincolnshire		Died *circa* 1404. He owned lands at Heyling, Lincolnshire

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
V Henry IV, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Coventry, 3 December, 1403, and actually met there, and at Westminster, after prorogation, 14 January, 1403–04	Sir Arnold Savage again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 523	15 Jan., 1403–4
VI Henry IV, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Coventry, 6 October, 1404	Sir William Sturmy, or Esturmy	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 546	7 October, 140[illegible]
VII Henry IV, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Coventry, 15 February 1405–06 (afterwards at Gloucester), and, after prorogation, met at Westminster, 1 March, 1405–06	Sir John Tiptoft	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 568	2 March, 1405–6
IX Henry IV, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Gloucester, 20 October, 1407	Thomas Chaucer	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 609	25 October, 140[illegible]
XI Henry IV, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 27 January, 1409–10	Thomas Chaucer again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 623	28 Jan., 1409–10
XIII Henry IV, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 3 November, 1411	Thomas Chaucer again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. III, p. 648	5 Nov., 1411

Close of Office	Constituency	Subsequent Rank or Style	Remarks
c. 10 April, 1403–4	Kent		Died 1410
4 November, 1404	Devon		"Parliamentum indoctorum" or Laymen's Parliament
2 December, 1406	Huntingdonshire	Baron Tiptoft 1426	The first Speaker to be raised to the Peerage. Died 1443
December, 1407	Oxfordshire		Believed to be son of the poet. Died 1434. Buried at Ewelme, Oxon. The Commons were directed to assemble in the Fratry of the Abbey at eight o'clock
May, 1410	Oxfordshire		
9 December, 1411	Oxfordshire		The King, in replying to the Speaker's excuse on presentation for the royal acceptance, said: "Qar il ne vorroit aucunement avoir nulle maniere de Novellerie en cest Parlement"

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XIV Henry IV, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 3 February, 1412–13	Speaker unknown		
I Henry V, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 14 May 1413	William Stourton. "Gisoit cy malades en son lyt qu'il ne purroit pluis outre entendre d'occupier le dit office de Parlour"	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, pp. 4, 5	18 May, 1413
Ditto	John Dorewood again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 5	3 June, 1413
II Henry V, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Leicester, 30 April, 1414	Sir Walter Hungerford	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 16	1 May, 1414
II Henry V, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 November, 1414	Thomas Chaucer again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 35	19 Nov., 1414
III Henry V, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 21 Oct., 1415, and, by prorogation, on 4 Nov.	Richard Redman, or Redmayne	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 63	5 Nov., 1415
III Henry V, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 Mar. 1415–16	Sir Walter Beauchamp	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 71	18 Mar., 1415-

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
3 June, 1413	Dorset		(?) Died 1417. Ancestor of Baron Stourton
9 June, 1413	Essex		
29 May, 1414	Wilts	Baron Hungerford, 1425–26	Son of Sir Thomas Hungerford (Speaker in 1377), died 1449, and was buried in Salisbury Cathedral
Date of dissolution not ascertained	Oxfordshire		
Sat less than a fortnight	Yorkshire		Died 1426
May, 1416	Wiltshire		Styled "Prolocutor"

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
IV Henry V, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 October 1416	Roger Flower	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 95	October, 1416
V Henry V, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 November, 1417	Roger Flower again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 107	November, 1417
VII Henry V, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 October, 1419	Roger Flower again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 117	October, 1419
VIII Henry V, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 2 Dec., 1420	Roger Hunt	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 123	4 Dec., 1420
IX Henry V, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 2 May, 1421	Thomas Chaucer again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 130	May, 1421
IX Henry V, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 1 December, 1421	Richard Baynard	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 151	3 December 1421
I Henry VI, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 9 Nov., 1422	Roger Flower again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 170	11 Nov., 1422
II Henry VI, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 October, 1423	Sir John Russell	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 198	21 Oct., 1423

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
18 November, 1416	Rutland		Died 1428
17 December, 1417	Rutland		
November, 1419	Rutland		
Date of close of this Parliament unascertained	Bedfordshire		Omitted by Hakewil at this date. An eminent lawyer and a Baron of the Exchequer. Memorial brass dated 1473 at Gt. Linford, Bucks, may represent him or his son
Date of close of Parliament unascertained	Oxfordshire		First to be five times Speaker. Died 1434 and was buried at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, where his monument and brass remain
Date of close of Parliament unascertained	Essex		(Not mentioned in *Dictionary of National Biography*)
18 December, 1422	Rutland		
28 February, 1423–24	Herefordshire		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
III Henry VI, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 30 April, 1425	Sir Thomas Walton, or Wauton	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 262	2 May, 1425
IV Henry VI, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Leicester, 18 February, 1425–26	Sir Richard Vernon	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 296	28 Feb., 1425-26
VI Henry VI, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 October, 1427	Sir John Tyrrell	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 317	15 October, 1427
VIII Henry VI, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 22 September, 1429	William Alington	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 336	23 Sept., 1429
IX Henry VI, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 January, 1430–31	Sir John Tyrrell again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 368	13 Jan., 1430-31
X Henry VI, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 May, 1432	Sir John Russell again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 389	14 May, 1432
XI Henry VI, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 8 July, 1433	Roger Hunt again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 420	10 July, 1433
XIV Henry VI, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 10 October, 1435	John Bowes	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 482	12 October, 1435

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
14 July, 1425	Bedfordshire		Died 1437. Owned lands at Great Staughton, Hunts
1 June, 1426	Derbyshire		Died 1451. Ancestor of Lord Vernon
25 March, 1428	Herts		Died 1437
23 Feb., 1429-30	Cambridgeshire		
20 March, 1430–31	Essex		
17 July, 1432	Herefordshire		
21 December, 1433	Huntingdonshire		
23 December, 1435	Nottinghamshire		(Not mentioned in *Dictionary of Nationa Biography*)

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XV Henry VI, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 21 January, 1436–37	Sir John Tyrrell again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 496	23 Jan., 1436-37
Ditto	William Burley, or Boerley	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. IV, p. 502	19 Mar., 1436–37
XVIII Henry VI, and 12th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 November, 1439	William Tresham	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 4	13 Nov., 1439
XX Henry VI, and 13th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 January, 1441–42	William Tresham again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 36	26 Jan., 1441–42
XXIII Henry VI, and 14th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 February, 1444–45	William Burley again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 67; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxiii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	26 Feb., 1444-45
XXV Henry VI, and 15th Parliament summoned to meet at Bury St. Edmunds, 10 February, 1446–47	William Tresham again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 129	11 Feb., 1446-47
XXVII Henry VI, and 16th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 February, 1448–49	Sir John Say	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 141	13 Feb., 1448–49

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
March	Essex		
27 March, 1437	Salop		
1440	Northants		Murdered at Thorpland, Northants, 1450. Owned lands at Sywell, Northants. Leland, in his Itinerary, gives a circumstantial account of his death
27 May, 1442	Northants		
9 April, 1445	Salop		
3 March, 1446–47	Northants		
16 July, 1449	Cambridgeshire		Died 1478. Buried in Broxbourne Church, Herts, where his memorial brass remains

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXVIII Henry VI, and 17th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 November, 1449	Sir John Popham	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 171	8 Nov., 1449
Ditto	William Tresham again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 172	8 Nov., 1449
XXIX Henry VI, and 18th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 November, 1450	Sir William Oldhall	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 210	7 Nov., 1450
XXXI Henry VI, and 19th Parliament summoned to meet at Reading, 6 Mar., 1452–53	Thomas Thorpe	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 227	8 Mar., 1452–53
XXXII Henry VI, and 19th Parliament —*continued*	Sir Thomas Charlton	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 240	16 Feb., 1453-54
XXXIII Henry VI, and 20th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 9 July, 1455	Sir John Wenlock	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 280; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxiii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	10 July, 1455

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
Excused on ground of ill-health	Hants		Died *c.* 1463
Spring, 1450	Northants		This Parliament, after being prorogued over Christmas, reassembled 22 January, and was sitting on 17 March. In April it met again at Leicester
May, 1451	Herefordshire		Died 1460. Buried in St. Michael, Paternoster Royal, London
16 February, 1453–54	Essex		Beheaded at Haringay Park, Middlesex, 1461
April, 1454	Middlesex		In place of Thorpe imprisoned. (Not mentioned in *D.N.B.*)
January, 1455–56	Bedfordshire	Lord Wenlock 1461	Killed at the battle of Tewkesbury, 1471

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXVIII Henry VI, and 21st Parliament summoned to meet at Coventry, 20 November, 1459	Sir Thomas Tresham	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 345; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxiv, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	21 Nov., 1459
XXXIX Henry VI, and 22nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 7 October, 1460	John Green	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 373	8 October, 1460
I Edward IV, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 4 November, 1461	Sir James Strangeways	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 462; and Appendix to *Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxiv, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	5 Nov., 1461
III Edward IV, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 29 April, 1463	Sir John Say again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 497; and Appendix to *Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxv, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	30 April, 1463
VII Edward IV, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 3 June, 1467	Sir John Say again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. V, p. 572	5 June, 1467
IX Edward IV, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at York, 22 Sept., 1469	No Speaker chosen		

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
20 December, 1459	Northants		Beheaded at Tewkesbury, 1471
Only sat about ten days	Essex		(Not mentioned in *D. N.B.*)
6 May, 1461–62	Yorkshire		Introduced a new precedent. Besides making the customary "excuse" on election he offered a formal address to Crown on the political situation. Buried in St. Mary Overy's, Southwark
1465	Herts		
May, 1468	Herts		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
X Edward IV, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 26 November, 1470			
XII Edward IV, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 Oct., 1472	William Alington	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 4	7 October, 1472
XVII Edward IV, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 January, 1477–78	William Alington again	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 168	17 Jan., 1477-78
XXII Edward IV, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 January, 1482–83	John Wood, or Wode	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 197; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxv, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	21 Jan., 1482-83
I Richard III, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 23 January, 1483–84	William Catesby	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 238; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxv, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	24 Jan., 1483-84

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
			No particulars known. Henry VI again temporarily dominant, and records, if any were kept, probably destroyed by order of Edward IV
14 March, 1474–75	Cambridgeshire		
Date of close of Parliament unascertained but it sat about five weeks	Cambridgeshire		Believed to have been buried in Bottisham Church, Cambridgeshire, in an altar tomb from which the brass has disappeared
February, 1482–83	Sussex (probably)		There is some doubt as to whether he represented Surrey or Sussex, but the latter appears to be more probable
20 February, 1483–84	Northants		Beheaded 1485, after the Battle of Bosworth. Memorial brass in the church at Ashby St. Ledgers, Northants

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
I Henry VII, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 7 Nov., 1485	Sir Thomas Lovell	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 268; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvi, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	8 Nov., 1485
III Henry VII, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 9 Nov., 1487	Sir John Mordaunt	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 386; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvi, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	10 Nov., 1487
IV Henry VII, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 January, 1488–89	Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 410; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvi, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	14 Jan., 1488–8
VII Henry VII, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 17 October, 1491	Sir Richard Empson	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 440; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvi, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	18 October, 149

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
March, 1486	Northants		The last of the martial Speakers. Died 1524. Bronze medallion portrait by Torregiano now placed in Henry VII's Chapel, Westminster Abbey
Date of close of Parliament unascertained	Bedfordshire	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Died 1506. Monumental effigy at Turvey, Beds.
Feb. 27, 1490	Yorkshire		(Not mentioned in *D.N.B.*) Died 1495
March, 1491–92	Northants	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Beheaded with Dudley 1510

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XI Henry VII, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 14 October, 1495	Sir Robert Drury	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 458; (Choice of Speaker declared by a Committee without naming the person elected)	15 October, 149
XII Henry VII, on 24 October, 1496, a great Council, rather than a Parliament, met at Westminster	Sir Reginald Bray (President or Chairman)	Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvii	
XII Henry VII, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 January, 1496–97	Sir Thomas Englefield	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 510; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvii	19 Jan., 1496–9
XIX Henry VII, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 January, 1503–04	Edmond Dudley	*Rot. Parl.*, Vol. VI, p. 521; and Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxvii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	26 Jan., 1503–
I Henry VIII, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 21 January, 1509–10	Sir Thomas Englefield again	Appendix to official *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxviii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	23 Jan., 1509

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
Date of the close of this Parliament unascertained	Suffolk		Died 1536. Monumental effigy in St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmund's
	Bedfordshire or Northants in Parliament of 495	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Died 1503, and was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, but without a monument
Date of close of this Parliament unascertained	Berkshire		(Not mentioned in *D.N.B.*) Died 1514
Date of close of this Parliament unascertained	Staffordshire		Advocate of absolute monarchy. Beheaded with Empson 1510
23 February, 1509–10	Berkshire		Died 1514

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
III Henry VIII, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 4 Feb., 1511–12	Sir Robert Sheffield	Appendix to official *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxviii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	5 Feb., 1511–12
VI Henry VIII, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 5 Feb., 1514–15, but met ultimately at Blackfriars	Sir Thomas Nevill	Appendix to official *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxviii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	6 Feb., 1514–15
XIV Henry VIII, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Black Friars, 15 April, 1523	Sir Thomas More	Appendix to official *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxviii, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	16 April, 1523
XXI Henry VIII, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 3 Nov., 1529	Sir Thomas Audley	Appendix to *Return of Names of Members of Parliament*, p. xxix, where he is styled "Prolocutor"	5 Nov., 1529
Ditto	Sir Humphrey Wingfield	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 524	9 Feb., 1533
XXVIII Henry VIII, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 8 June, 1536	Sir Richard Rich	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 529	9 June, 1536

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
? Dec., 1513	Lincolnshire		Died 1518. Buried in the Church of the Augustinian Friars, London
22 Dec., 1515	Kent		Died 1542. Memorial brass in Mereworth Church, Kent
13 August, 1523	Middlesex	Lord Chancellor	Beheaded 1535
26 Jan., 1533	Essex	Lord Chancellor. Lord Audley 1538	Died 1544
4 April, 1536	Great Yarmouth		The first Speaker to sit for a borough constituency. Died 1545. This was the longest Parliament known to this date
18 July, 1536	Colchester	Lord Chancellor 1547–51. Lord Rich	Died 1567

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXI Henry VIII, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 28 April, 1539	Sir Nicholas Hare	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 536	28 April, 1539
XXXIII Henry VIII, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 January, 1541–42	Sir Thomas Moyle	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 550	19 Jan., 1541-42
XXXVII Henry VIII, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 23 November, 1545	Sir John Baker	*Acts of the Privy Council* (edited by Sir J. R. Dasent), Vol. II, p. 24	November, 1545
I Edward VI, and 1st Parliament met in St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, 4 November, 1547	Sir John Baker again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 1	4 Nov., 1547
VII Edward VI, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 1 Mar., 1552–53	Sir James Dyer	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 24	2 Mar., 1552–53
I Mary, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 5 October, 1553	Sir John Pollard	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 607	5 October, 1553
I Mary, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 2 April, 1554	Sir Robert Brooke	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 613	2 April, 1554
I and II Philip and Mary, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 Nov., 1554	Sir Clement Heigham	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. I, p. 617	12 Nov., 1554

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
24 July, 1540	Norfolk	Master of the Rolls 1553	Died 1557
28 March, 1544	Kent		Died 1560
31 Jan., 1546–47	Huntingdonshire	Chancellor of the Exchequer	Died 1558
15 April, 1552	Huntingdonshire		Died 1558
31 March	Cambridgeshire	Chief Justice of the Common Pleas	Died 1582
5 December	Oxfordshire		Died 1557
5 May	London	Chief Justice of the Common Pleas	Died 1558. The first Speaker to represent the City of London. Monument in Claverley Church, near Wolverhampton
16 Jan., 1554–55	West Looe	Chief Baron of the Exchequer	Died 1570. Memorial brass in Barrow Church, Suffolk

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
II and III Philip and Mary, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 21 October, 1555	Sir John Pollard again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 42	21 Oct., 1555
IV and V Philip and Mary, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 January, 1557–58	Sir William Cordell	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 47	20 Jan., 1557-58
I Elizabeth, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 January, 1558–59	Sir Thomas Gargrave	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 53	25 Jan., 1558-59
V Elizabeth, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 11 January, 1562–63	Thomas Williams	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 79	12 Jan., 1562-63
VIII Elizabeth, and 2nd Parliament. Second session began 30 September, 1566	Richard Onslow	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 121	1 October, 1566
XIII Elizabeth, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 2 April, 1571	Sir Christopher Wray	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 156	2 April, 1571

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
9 December, 1555	Exeter or Chippenham. The latter is the more probable as the official return gives the name as Johannes Pollard "Armiger," whereas the member for Exeter is called 'Miles,' and the Speaker was not a knight in 1555		Died 1557
17 November, 1558	Suffolk	Master of the Rolls	Died 1581
8 May, 1559	Yorkshire	Vice-President of the Council of the North	Died 1579
10 April, 1563	Exeter		Died 1566. Buried in Harford Church, Co. Devon
2 Jan., 1566–67	Steyning		Died 1571
29 May, 1571	Ludgershall	Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench	Died 1592

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XIV Elizabeth, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 8 May, 1572	Sir Robert Bell	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 205 *Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 94, which gives the date of his election as 10 May	8 May, 1572
Ditto—*continued.* 4th and last session began 16 January, 1580–81	Sir John Popham	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 117	18 Jan., 1580-81
XXVII Elizabeth, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 23 November, 1584	Sir John Puckering	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 333	23 Nov., 1584
XXVIII Elizabeth, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 29 Oct. 1586	Sir John Puckering again	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 392	29 Oct., 1586
XXXI Elizabeth, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 4 Feb., 1588–89	Thomas Snagge	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 428	4 Feb., 1588–89
XXXV Elizabeth, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 February, 1592–93	Sir Edward Coke	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 469	19 Feb., 1592–93

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
1576	Lyme Regis	Chief Baron of the Exchequer	Died 1577
19 April, 1583, but the House did not sit after 18 Mar., 1580-81	Bristol	Chief Justice of the King's Bench	Died 1607
14 Sept., 1586	Carmarthen	Lord Keeper of the Great Seal 1592	Died 1596
23 March, 1586–87	Gatton		
29 March, 1589	Bedford		Died 1593. (The *Dictionary of National Biography* says he was chosen on 12 November, 1588, but there was no Parliament in session at that date)
10 April, 1593	Norfolk	Chief Justice of the Common Pleas 1606, Chief Justice of the King's Bench 1613-16	Died 1634

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXIX Elizabeth, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 24 Oct. 1597	Sir Christopher Yelverton	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 550	24 Oct., 1597
XLIII Elizabeth, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 27 October, 1601	Sir John Croke	Symonds D'Ewes, *Journals*, p. 621	27 October, 1601
I James I, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 March, 1603–04	Sir Edward Phelips	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 141	19 Mar., 1603-4
XII James I, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 5 April, 1614	Sir Randolph Crewe	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 455	5 April, 1614
XVIII James I, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 16 Jan. 1620–21	Sir Thomas Richardson	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 507	30 Jan., 1620–21
XXI James I, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 February, 1623–24. King's speech delivered 19 February	Sir Thomas Crewe	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 670	19 Feb., 1623-24
I Charles I, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 17 May, 1625. (Adjourned to Oxford)	Sir Thomas Crewe again	There is no mention in the *Journals* of his re-election to the Chair. Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. II, p. 3	18 June, 1625

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
9 Feb., 1597–98	Northants	Justice of the Queen's Bench	Died 1612
19 December, 1601	London	Judge and Recorder of London	Died 1620
9 Feb., 1610–11	Somerset	Master of the Rolls 1611	Died 1614
7 June, 1614	? Brackley	Chief Justice of the King's Bench	Died 1646
8 Feb., 1621–22	St. Albans	Chief Justice of the Common Pleas 1626	Died 1635
27 March, 1625, but the House did not sit after 29 May, 1624	Aylesbury		Died 1634
12 August, 1625	Gatton		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
I Charles I, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 Feb., 1625–26	Sir Heneage Finch	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 816	6 Feb., 1625–26
III Charles I, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 17 March, 1627–28	Sir John Finch	*Commons Journals*, Vol. I, p. 872	17 Mar., 1627-28
XVI Charles I, 4th or "Short" Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster 13 April, 1640	Sir John Glanville	*Commons Journals*, Vol. II, p. 3	13 April, 1640
XVI Charles I, 5th or "Long" Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster 3 November, 1640. Dispersed by Cromwell, 20 April, 1653	William Lenthall	*Commons Journals*, Vol. II, p. 20	3 Nov., 1640
1647—*continued*	Henry Pelham	*Commons Journals*, Vol. V, p. 259	30 July, 1647
"Long" Parliament and "Rump" Parliament	William Lenthall again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. V, p. 268	6 August, 1647; returned to the Chair
"Barebones" or Little Parliament met 4 July, 1653. (Lenthall not a member of it)	Rev. Francis Rous	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 281	5 July, 1653
First Parliament of Oliver, Protector, assembled 3 September 1654	William Lenthall again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 365	4 Sept., 1654
Second Parliament of Oliver, Protector, assembled 17 September, 1656	Sir Thomas Widdrington	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 423	17 Sept., 1656

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
15 June, 1626	London		Died 1631
10 March, 1628–29	Canterbury	Lord Keeper of the Great Seal 1639–40 Baron Finch of Fordwich	Died 1660
5 May, 1640	Bristol		Died 1661
Held office till 26 July, 1647, when he abandoned the post to join the Army	Woodstock	Master of the Rolls, and a Commissioner of the Great Seal	Died 1662
5 August, 1647	Grantham		(Not mentioned by Manning or *D.N.B.*)
20 April, 1653	Woodstock		
12 December, 1653	? Devonshire	Sat in Cromwell's House of Lords	Died 1659
22 Jan., 1654-55	Oxfordshire		
4 Feb., 1657–58	Northumberland	Chief Baron of the Exchequer 1658–60	Died 1664. Buried in St. Giles's-in-the-Fields

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
Second Parliament of Oliver, Protector—*continued*	Bulstrode Whitelocke	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 482	27 Jan., 1656-5 appointed *pro tem.* during the absence o Widdrington from indispo sition
Parliament of Richard Cromwell, Protector, assembled 27 Jan., 1658–59	Chaloner Chute	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 594	27 Jan., 1658-5
Ditto	Sir Lislebone Long	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 612	9 Mar., 1658–5
Ditto	Thomas Bampfylde	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 613	16 Mar., 1658-5 and formall chosen, 15 Ap ril, 1659, afte the death o Chute
"Rump," or that portion of the Long Parliament which had continued sitting till ejected by Cromwell, recalled	William Lenthall again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 797	7 May, 1659
The Rump restored a second time	William Lenthall again	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. III, p. 1571	26 Dec., 1659
	William Say	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VII, p. 811	13 Jan., 1659- (during Len hall's absen from indisp sition)
Whole surviving body of the Long Parliament recalled after Monk's arrival in London	William Lenthall again		21 Jan., 1659-

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
	Buckingham-shire	Commissioner of the Great Seal 1648 and 1659	Died 1675
9 March, 1658–59	Middlesex		Died 1659
14 March, 1658–59	Wells		Died 1659
22 April, 1659	Exeter		(Not mentioned in *D.N.B.*) Died October 8, 1693, and was buried in St. Stephen's Church, Exeter
October 13, 1659, when the Rump was expelled by Lambert	Oxfordshire		
13 Jan., 1659-60	Oxfordshire		
21 January, 1659–60	Camelford		Died 1665 ?
16 March, 1659–60	Oxfordshire		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XII Charles II, and 1st or Convention Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 April, 1660	Sir Harbottle Grimston	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VIII, p. 1	25 April, 1660
XIII Charles II, and 2nd or "Pensionary" Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 8 May, 1661	Sir Edward Turnour	*Commons Journals*, Vol. VIII, p. 245	8 May, 1661
Ditto	Sir Job Charlton	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 245	4 Feb., 1672–7
Ditto	Sir Edward Seymour	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 253	18 Feb., 1672–7
Ditto	Sir Robert Sawyer	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 463	11 April, 1678
Ditto	Sir Edward Seymour again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 476	6 May, 1678
XXXI Charles II, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 Mar., 1678–79	Sir Edward Seymour again	Cobbett's *Parl. Hist.*, Vol. IV	6 Mar., 1678–7
Ditto	Sir William Gregory	Cobbett's *Parl. Hist.*, Vol. IV	15 Mar., 1678–7
XXXI Charles II, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 17 October, 1679. Met for business 21 October, 1680	Sir William Williams	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 636	21 Oct., 1680

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
29 December, 1660	Colchester	Master of the Rolls	Died 1685
23 May, 1671	Hertford	Chief Baron of the Exchequer	Died 1676
15 February, 1672–73	Ludlow	Justice of the Common Pleas	Died 1697
11 April, 1678	Totnes	A Lord of the Treasury	Died 1708
6 May, 1678	Wycombe	Attorney-General 1681-87	Died 1692
24 Jan., 1678-79	Totnes		
15 March, 1678–79, when his re-election to the Chair was refused by the King	Devonshire		
12 July, 1679	Weobley	Baron of the Exchequer	Died 1696
18 Jan., 1680-81	Chester	Solicitor-General 1687	Died 1700

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXIII Charles II, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Oxford, 21 Mar., 1680–81	Sir William Williams again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 705	21 Mar., 1680-81
I James II, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 May, 1685	Sir John Trevor	*Commons Journals*, Vol. IX, p. 713	19 May, 1685
Convention Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 22 January, 1688–89	Henry Powle	*Commons Journals*, Vol. X, p. 9	22 Jan., 1688-89
II William and Mary, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 March, 1689–90	Sir John Trevor again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. X, p. 347	20 Mar., 1689-90
Ditto	Paul Foley	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XI, p. 272	14 Mar., 1694-95
VII William and Mary, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 22 November, 1695	Paul Foley again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XI, p. 334	22 Nov., 1695
X William III, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 24 August, 1698, and met for despatch of business 6 December	Sir Thomas Littleton	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XII, p. 347	6 Dec., 1698
XII William III, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 6 Feb., 1700–01	Robert Harley	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XIII p. 325	10 Feb., 1700-

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
28 March, 1681	Chester		
2 July, 1687	Denbigh Borough	Master of the Rolls	Expelled the House for taking bribes, 16 March, 1694–95. Died 1717
6 February, 1688–89	Windsor (Whig)	Master of the Rolls	Died 1692
14 March, 1694–95	Yarmouth, Isle of Wight (Whig)		
11 October, 1695	Hereford (Tory)		Died 1699
7 July, 1698	Hereford (Tory)		
19 Dec., 1700	Woodstock (Whig)	Treasurer of the Navy	Died 1710. He requested to be excused from executing the office on the ground that he suffered from the stone
11 Nov., 1701	New Radnor (Tory)	Chancellor of the Exchequer, Earl of Oxford 1711	Died 1724

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XIII William III, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 30 December, 1701	Robert Harley again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XIII p. 645	30 Dec., 1701
I Anne, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 August, 1702, and met for despatch of business 20 October	Robert Harley again	Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*, Vol. VI, p. 46.	20 Oct., 1702
IV Anne, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 14 June, 1705, and met for despatch of business 25 October. Declared First Parliament of Great Britain, 29 April, 1707	John Smith	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XV, pp. 5 and 393	25 Oct., 1705
VI Anne, and 1st Parliament of Great Britain met at Westminster, 23 October, 1707	Ditto	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XV, p. 393	23 Oct., 1707
VII Anne, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 8 July, 1708, and met for despatch of business 16 November	Sir Richard Onslow	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XVI, p. 4	16 Nov., 1708
IX Anne, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 Nov. 1710	William Bromley	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XVI, p. 401	25 Nov., 1710

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
2 July, 1702	New Radnor (Tory)		Elected by a majority of four votes over Sir Thomas Littleton
5 April, 1705	New Radnor (Tory)		
13 April, 1708	Andover (Whig)	Chancellor of the Exchequer 1708–10	Died 1723
	Andover (Whig)		
21 Sept., 1710	Surrey (Whig)	Chancellor of the Exchequer 1714–15. Baron Onslow	Died 1717
8 August, 1713	Oxford University (Tory)	Secretary of State 1713–14	Died 1732

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XII Anne, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 November, 1713; and met for despatch of business 16 Feb., 1713–14. Queen's speech delivered 2 March	Sir Thomas Hanmer	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XVII, p. 472	16 Feb., 1713-14
I George I, and 1st Parliament summoned and met for business at Westminster, 17 March, 1714–15	Sir Spencer Compton	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XVIII, p. 16	17 Mar., 1714–15
VIII George I, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 10 May, 1722; met for business 9 October	Sir Spencer Compton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XX, p. 8	9 Oct., 1722
I George II, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 28 November, 1727; met for despatch of business 23 January, 1727–28	Arthur Onslow	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXI p. 20	23 Jan., 1727-28
VIII George II, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 June, 1734; met for despatch of business 14 January, 1734–35	Arthur Onslow again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXII, p. 324	14 Jan., 1734-35

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
15 Jan., 1714-15	Suffolk (Tory)		Died 1746.
10 Mar., 1721–22	Sussex (Whig)	First Lord of the Treasury 1742, and Earl of Wilmington	Died 1743.
5 August, 1727	Sussex (Whig)		
17 April, 1734	Surrey (Whig)		Died 1768, having been Speaker for the record number of years
27 April, 1741	Surrey (Whig)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XV George II, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 June, 1741; met for despatch of business 1 Dec., 1741	Arthur Onslow again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXIV, p. 8	1 Dec., 1741
XXI George II, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 13 August, 1747; met for despatch of business 10 Nov., 1747	Arthur Onslow again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXV, p. 416	10 Nov., 1747
XXVII George II, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 31 May, 1754	Arthur Onslow again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXVII, p. 7	31 May, 1754
I George III, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 19 May, 1761. King's speech delivered 3 November	Sir John Cust	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXIX, p. 8	3 Nov., 1761
VIII George III, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 10 May, 1768	Sir John Cust again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXXII, p. 6	10 May, 1768
Ditto	Sir Fletcher Norton	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXXII, p. 613	22 Jan., 1770

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
18 June, 1747	Surrey (Whig)		
8 April, 1754	Surrey (Whig)		
20 March, 1761	Surrey (Whig)		
11 March, 1768	Grantham (Tory)		Died 1770.
17 Jan., 1770	Grantham (Tory)		Died five days after his resignation.
30 Sept., 1774	Guildford (Tory)	Baron Grantley 1782	Died 1789.

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XV George III, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 29 November, 1774	Sir Fletcher Norton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXXV, p. 5	29 Nov., 1774
XXI George III, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 31 October, 1780	Charles Wolfran Cornwall	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 6	31 Oct., 1780
XXIV George III, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 18 May, 1784	Charles Wolfran Cornwall again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XL, p. 5	18 May, 1784
Ditto	William Wyndham Grenville	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XLIV, p. 45	5 Jan., 1789
Ditto	Henry Addington	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XLIV, p. 434	8 June, 1789
XXX George III, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 10 August, 1790; met for despatch of business 25 November, 1790	Henry Addington again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XLVI, p. 6	25 Nov., 1790

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
1 Sept., 1780	Guildford(Tory)	Baron Grantley 1782	
25 March, 1784	Winchelsea (Tory)		Died 1789
2 January, 1789	Rye (Tory)		
7 June, 1789	Buckingham-shire. Of a Whig family but a sup-porter of Pitt	Prime Minister "All the Tal-ents." Baron Grenville 1790	Died 1834
11 June, 1790	Truro (Tory)	Prime Minister. Viscount Sid-mouth 1805	Died 1844
20 May, 1796	Devizes (Tory)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXVI George III, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 12 July, 1796; and met for despatch of business 27 September	Henry Addington again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LII, p. 8	27 Sept., 1796
(XLI George III, by proclamation of 5 November, 1800. Members then sitting were declared members of the First Parliament of the United Kingdom, to meet 22 January, 1801. King's speech delivered 2 February, 1801)	ditto	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LVI, p. 6	22 Jan., 1801
7th Parliament—*continued*	Sir John Mitford	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LVI, p. 33	11 Feb., 1801
Ditto	Charles Abbot	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LVII, p. 93	10 Feb., 1802
XLII George III, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 31 August, 1802; and met for despatch of business 16 November. King's speech delivered 23 November	Charles Abbot again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LVIII, p. 8	16 Nov., 1802
XLVII George III, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 15 December, 1806. King's speech delivered 19 December	Charles Abbot again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXII, p. 4	15 Dec., 1806

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
16 Feb., 1801	Devizes (Tory)		
	Devizes (Tory)		
9 February, 1802	Northumberland (Tory)	Baron Redesdale 1802. Lord Chancellor of Ireland 1802	Died 1830
29 June, 1802	Woodstock (Tory)	Baron Colchester 1817	Died 1829. Buried in Westminster Abbey. The last Speaker to be so honoured
29 April, 1807	Woodstock (Tory)		
29 April, 1807	Oxford University (Tory)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XLVII George III, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 22 June, 1807. King's speech delivered 26 June	Charles Abbot again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXII, p. 560	22 June, 1807
LIII George III, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 24 November, 1812. Prince Regent's speech delivered 30 Nov.	Charles Abbot again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXVIII, p. 4	24 Nov., 1812
Ditto	Charles Manners-Sutton	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXII, p. 307	2 June, 1817
LVIII George III, and 12th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 4 August, 1818; met for despatch of business 14 January, 1819. King's speech delivered 21 Jan.	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXIV, p. 8	14 Jan., 1819
I George IV, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 21 April, 1820. King's speech delivered 27 April	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXV, p. 108	21 April, 1820

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
29 Sept., 1812	Oxford University (Tory)		
2 June, 1817	Oxford University (Tory)		
10 June, 1818	Scarborough (Tory)	Viscount Canterbury 1835	Died 1845
29 Feb., 1820	Scarborough (Tory)		
2 June, 1826	Scarborough (Tory)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
VII George IV, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 25 July, 1826; met for despatch of business 14 November. King's speech delivered 21 November	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXXII p. 8	14 Nov., 1826
I William IV, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 14 September, 1830; met for despatch of business 26 October. King's speech delivered 2 November	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 6	26 Oct., 1830
I William IV, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 14 June, 1831. King's speech delivered 21 June	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 522	14 June, 1831
III William IV, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 29 January, 1833. King's speech delivered 5 February	Charles Manners-Sutton again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. LXXXVIII p. 5	29 Jan., 1833
V William IV, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 19 February, 1835. King's speech delivered 24 February	James Abercromby	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XC, p. 5	19 Feb., 1835

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
24 July, 1830	Scarborough (Tory)		
23 April, 1831	Scarborough (Tory)		
3 Dec., 1832	Scarborough (Tory)		
29 Dec., 1834	Cambridge University (Tory)		
17 July, 1837	Edinburgh (Whig)	Baron Dunfermline 1839	The only Speaker to come from north of the Tweed. Died 1858

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
I Victoria, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 11 September, 1837; and met for despatch of business 15 November. Queen's speech delivered 20 November	James Abercromby again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XCIII, p. 7	15 Nov., 1837
Ditto	Charles Shaw-Lefevre	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XCIV, p. 274	27 May, 1839
V Victoria, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 19 August, 1841. Queen's speech delivered 24 August	Charles Shaw-Lefevre again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. XCVI, p. 465	19 August, 1841
XI Victoria, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 21 September, 1847; and met for despatch of business 18 November. Queen's speech delivered 23 November	Charles Shaw-Lefevre again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CIII, p. 7	18 Nov., 1847
XVI Victoria, and 4th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 20 August, 1852. Met for despatch of business 4 November. Queen's speech delivered 11 November	Charles Shaw-Lefevre again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CVIII, p. 7	4 Nov., 1852

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
15 May, 1839	Edinburgh (Whig)		
23 June, 1841	North Hampshire (Liberal)	Viscount Eversley 1857	Died 1888
23 July, 1847	North Hampshire (Liberal)		
1 July, 1852	North Hampshire (Liberal)		
21 March, 1857	North Hampshire (Liberal)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XX Victoria, and 5th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 30 April, 1857. Queen's speech delivered 7 May	John Evelyn Denison	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXII, p. 119	30 April, 1857
XXII Victoria, and 6th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 31 May, 1859. Queen's speech delivered 7 June	John Evelyn Denison again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXIV, p. 191	31 May, 1859
XXIX Victoria, and 7th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 15 August, 1865; and met for despatch of business 1 February, 1866. Queen's speech delivered 6 February	John Evelyn Denison again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXI, p. 9	1 Feb., 1866
XXXII Victoria, and 8th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 10 December, 1868. Queen's speech delivered 16 February, 1869	John Evelyn Denison again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXIV, p. 5	10 Dec., 1868
Ditto	Henry Bouverie William Brand	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXVII, p. 23	9 Feb., 1872

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
23 April, 1859	North Notts (Liberal)	Viscount Ossington 1872	Died 1873. His election to the Chair was unanimous on each occasion
6 July, 1865	North Notts (Liberal)		
11 Nov., 1868	North Notts (Liberal)		
7 Feb., 1872	North Notts (Liberal)		
26 Jan., 1874	Cambridgeshire (Liberal)	Viscount Hampden 1884	Died 1892. His election to the Chair was unanimous on each occasion

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
XXXVIII Victoria, and 9th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 5 March, 1874. Queen's speech delivered 19 March	Henry Bouverie William Brand again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXIX, p. 5	5 Mar., 1874
XLIII Victoria, and 10th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 29 April, 1880. Queen's speech delivered 20 May	Henry Bouverie William Brand again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXXV, p. 5	29 April, 1880
Ditto	Arthur Wellesley Peel	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXXXIX, p. 74	26 Feb., 1884
XLIX Victoria, and 11th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 12 January, 1886. Queen's speech (delivered in person by Her Majesty) 21 January	Arthur Wellesley Peel again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXLI, p. 5	12 Jan., 1886
L Victoria, and 12th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 5 August, 1886. Queen's speech delivered 19 August	Arthur Wellesley Peel again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXLI, p. 315	5 August, 1886

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
24 March, 1880	Cambridgeshire (Liberal)		
25 Feb., 1884	Cambridgeshire (Liberal)		
18 Nov., 1885	Warwick and Leamington (Liberal)	Viscount Peel, 1895	His election to the Chair was unanimous on each occasion
26 June	Warwick and Leamington (Liberal)		
28 June, 1892	Warwick and Leamington (Liberal)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
LVI Victoria, and 13th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 4 August, 1892. Queen's speech delivered 8 August	Arthur Wellesley Peel again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CXLVII, p. 412	4 August, 189
Ditto	William Court Gully	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CL, p. 149	10 April, 1895
LIX Victoria, and 14th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 12 August, 1895. Queen's speech delivered 15 August	William Court Gully again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CL, p. 340	12 August, 189
LXIV Victoria, and 15th Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, 1 November, 1900; and met for despatch of business 3 December. Queen's speech delivered 6 Dec.	William Court Gully again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CLV, p. 406	3 Dec., 1900
And I Edward VII, and 1st Parliament summoned to hear the King's speech 14 February, 1901			
Ditto—*continued*	James William Lowther	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CLX, p. 249	8 June, 1905

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
April, 1895	Warwick and Leamington (Liberal)		
July, 1895	Carlisle (Liberal)	Viscount Selby, 1905	Died 1909.
5 Sept., 1900	Carlisle (Liberal)		
June, 1905	Carlisle (Liberal)		
Jan., 1906	Cumberland (Penrith Div.) (Conservative)		

Parliament	*Speaker*	*Authority*	*Date of Appointment*
VI Edward VII, and 2nd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 13 Feb., 1906. King's speech delivered 19 Feb.	James William Lowther again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CLXI, p. 5	13 Feb., 1906
X Edward VII, and 3rd Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business, 15 Feb., 1910. King's speech delivered 21 Feb.	James William Lowther again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CLXV, p. 5	15 Feb., 1910
And I George V, 7 May, 1910			
I George V, and 1st Parliament summoned to meet at Westminster, and met for despatch of business 31 January, 1911. King's speech delivered 6 Feb.	James William Lowther again	*Commons Journals*, Vol. CLXVI, p. 5	31 Jan., 1911

It will be noticed that the dates of several elections to the Chair and th sequence of names do not, in all cases, correspond with the list of Speaker inscribed on the panels of the Library of the House of Commons. They unfortunately, contain many inaccuracies, and it has been the Author' endeavour to correct them as far as possible in these pages.

Close of Office	*Constituency*	*Subsequent Rank or Style*	*Remarks*
o Jan., 1910	Cumberland (Penrith Div.) (Conservative)		
28 Nov., 1910	Cumberland (Penrith Div.) (Conservative)		
	Cumberland (Penrith Div.) (Conservative		

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE following curious account of Sir Thomas Lovell's election to the Chair in 1485 shows that at the commencement of the Tudor era the Speaker was recommended for the Royal approval by a committee of Knights of the Shire, aided, apparently, by a small number of borough members, acting in concert with the Lord Chancellor and the Recorder of London. It is taken from a report made to the corporation of Colchester, by Thomas Christmas and John Vertue, burgesses for Colchester, of the first Parliament of Henry VII (printed in Benham's *Red Paper Book of Colchester* [1902], pp. 61–2) :—

" The vijth day of November, be ix of the clokke, so for to precede unto a leccion for [to] chose a Speker. So the leccion gave hir voyse unto Thomas Lovell, a gentleman . . . Lincolnes Inne. That doon, it pleased the Knyghts that were there present for to ryse f[rom] ther sets and so for to goo to that place where as the Speker stode and [brought him and] set hym in his sete. That done, there he thanked all the maisters of the plase. Then [it pleased] the Recorder of London for to shew the custume of the place. This was his seyeng : ' Maister Speker, and all my maisters, there hath ben an ordir in this place in tymes passed [that] ye shuld commaunde a certayn [? number] of Knyghts and other gentilmen, such as it

pleaseth you . . . to the number of xxiiij, and they to goo togedir unto my Lord Chaunceler, and there to show unto his lordship that they have doon the Kyngs commaundement in the chosyn of our Speker, desyring his lordship if that he wold shew it unto the Kyng's grace. And . . . whan it plesith the King to commaunde us when, we shall present hym afore his high grace. Yt pleased the Kyng that we shuld present hym upon the ix day of Novembre. That same day, at x of the cloke, sembled Maister Speker and all the Knyghts, sitteners,[1] and burgeyses in the parlement house, and so departed into the parlement chamber before the Kyngs grace and all his lords spirituall and temporall and all his Juggs,[2] and so presented our Speker before the Kyngs grace and all his lords spirituall and temporall.' "

The Lord Chancellor referred to was John Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, and the Recorder of London was Thomas Fitzwilliam, who was himself Speaker in 1488–89. Speaker Lovell was a contemporary of Abbot Islip, the last of the great monastic builders to stamp his individuality on the fabric of the Abbey. As Treasurer of the Royal Household Lovell probably assisted at the laying of the foundation stone of Henry the Seventh's Chapel, in which, after the lapse of four centuries, his noble medallion portrait by Torregiano has, with singular appropriateness, recently been placed. (See illustration in this volume.)

[1] Citizens. [2] Judges.

APPENDIX II

Sir Thomas More's Speech on presentation for the Royal Approval, 1523. *Translated from the original Latin.*

"ON Saturday the 18th day of April, the 4th day of Parliament, the Commons from their House, appearing before our Lord the King in full Parliament, presented to our Lord the King Thomas More, knight, as their Speaker; whom our aforesaid Lord the King was graciously pleased to accept.

"Whereupon Thomas, after making his excuse before our Lord the King, inasmuch as his excuse could not be admitted on the part of our Lord the King, made his most humble supplication, that, with the like liberty of speech, he might publish and declare all and singular things to be by him published and declared in the Parliament aforesaid, in the name of the said Commons; but that if he declared any things enjoined on him by his Fellows otherwise than they themselves were agreed upon, either by adding or diminishing, he might be enabled to correct and amend the things so declared by his Fellows aforesaid; and that his Protestation to this effect might be entered on the Roll of the Parliament aforesaid.

"To whom, by the King's command, answer was made

by the most Reverend Legate, the Lord Chancellor, that Thomas should employ and enjoy the like liberty of speech as other Speakers, in the times of the noble ancestors of our Lord the King of England, were wont to use and enjoy in Parliaments of this kind."

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